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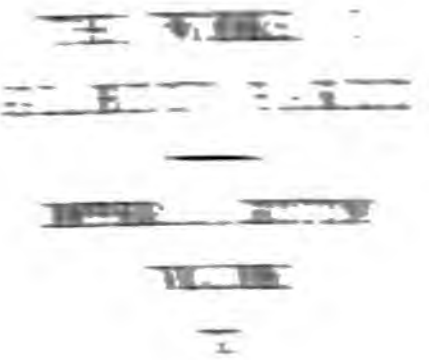

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"How dare you say that to me!"

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ER

ON OF A

LAVILETTES

THE EAGLE

NEW YORK

1913

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GILBERT PARKER

THE TRANSLATION OF A SAVAGE

THE POMP OF THE LAVILETTES

AT THE SIGN OF THE EAGLE

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

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"How dare you say that to me!"

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"[illegible] that to me"

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GILBERT PARKER

THE TRANSLATION OF A SAVAGE

THE POMP OF THE LAVILETTES

AT THE SIGN OF THE EAGLE

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NEW YORK

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THE TRANSLATION OF A SAINT

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TO

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The Translation of a Savage was written in the early autumn of 1893, at Hampstead Heath, where for over twenty years I have gone, now and then, when I wished to be in an atmosphere conducive to composition. Hampstead is one of the parts of London which has as yet been scarcely invaded by the lodging-house keeper. It is very difficult to get apartments at Hampstead; it is essentially a residential place; and, like Chelsea, has literary and artistic character all its own. I think I have seen more people carrying books in their hands at Hampstead than in any other spot in England; and there it was, perched above London, with eyes looking towards the Atlantic over the leagues of land and the thousand leagues of sea, that I wrote *The Translation of a Savage*. It was written, as it were, in one concentrated effort, a ceaseless writing. It was, in effect, what the *Daily Chronicle* said of *When Valmond Came to Pontiac*, a *tour de force*. It belonged to a *genre* which compelled me to dispose of a thing in one continuous effort, or the impulse, impetus, and fulness of movement was gone. The writing of a book of the kind admitted of no invasion from extraneous sources, and that was why, while writing *The Translation of a Savage* at Hampstead, my letters were only delivered to me once a week. I saw no friends, for no one knew where I was; but I walked the heights, I practised with my golf clubs on the Heath, and I sat in the early autumn evenings looking out at London in that agony of energy which its myriad lives represented. It was a good time.

The story had a basis of fact; the main incident was true. It happened, however, in Michigan rather than in Canada; but I placed the incident in Canada where it was just as true to the life. I was living in Hertfordshire at the time of writing the story, and that is why the English scenes were worked out in Hertfordshire and in London. When I had finished the tale, there came over me suddenly a kind of feeling that the incident was too bold and maybe too crude to be believed, and I was

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almost tempted to consign it to the flames; but the editor of *The English Illustrated Magazine*, Sir C. Kinloch-Cooke, took a wholly different view, and eagerly published it. The judgment of the press was favourable,—highly so—and I was as much surprised as pleased when Mr. George Moore, in the Hogarth Club one night, in 1894, said to me: "There is a really remarkable play in that book of yours, *The Translation of a Savage.*" I had not thought up to that time that my work was of the kind which would appeal to George Moore, but he was always making discoveries. Meeting him in Pall Mall one day, he said to me: "My dear fellow, I have made a great discovery. I have been reading the Old Testament. It is magnificent. In the mass of its incoherence it has a series of the most marvellous stories. Do you remember—" etc. Then he came home and had tea with me, revelling, in the meantime, on having discovered the Bible!

I cannot feel that *The Translation of a Savage* has any significance beyond the truthfulness with which I believe it describes the transformation, or rather the evolution, of a primitive character into a character with an intelligence of perception and a sympathy which is generally supposed to be the outcome of long processes of civilisation and culture. The book has so many friends—this has been sufficiently established by the very large sale it has had in cheap editions—that I am still disposed to feel it was an inevitable manifestation in the progress of my art, such as it is. People of diverse conditions of life have found in it something to interest and to stimulate. One of the most volcanic of the Labour members in the House of Commons told me that the violence of his opposition to me in debate on a certain bill was greatly moderated by the fact that I had written *The Translation of a Savage;* while a certain rather grave duke remarked to me concerning the character of Lali that "She would have been all right anywhere." I am bound to say that he was a duke who, while a young man, knew the wilds of Canada and the United States almost as well as I know Westminster.

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THE TRANSLATION OF A SAVAGE

CHAPTER I

HIS GREAT MISTAKE

It appeared that Armour had made the great mistake of his life. When people came to know, they said that to have done it when sober had shown him possessed of a kind of maliciousness and cynicism almost pardonable, but to do it when tipsy proved him merely weak and foolish. But the fact is, he was less tipsy at the time than was imagined; and he could have answered to more malice and cynicism than was credited to him. To those who know the world it is not singular that, of the two, Armour was thought to have made the mistake and had the misfortune, or that people wasted their pity and their scorn upon him alone. Apparently they did not see that the woman was to be pitied. He had married her; and she was only an Indian girl from Fort Charles of the Hudson's Bay Company, with a little honest white blood in her veins. Nobody, not even her own people, felt that she had anything at stake, or was in danger of unhappiness, or was other than a person who had ludicrously come to bear the name of Mrs. Francis Armour. If any one had said in justification that she loved the man, the answer would have been that plenty of Indian women had loved white

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men, but had not married them, and yet the population of half-breeds went on increasing.

Frank Armour had been a popular man in London. His club might be found in the vicinity of Pall Mall, his father's name was high and honoured in the Army List, one of his brothers had served with Wolseley in Africa, and Frank himself, having no profession, but with a taste for business and investment, had gone to Canada with some such intention as Lord Selkirk's in the early part of the century. He owned large shares in the Hudson's Bay Company, and when he travelled through the North-West country, prospecting, he was received most hospitably. Of an inquiring and gregarious nature he went as much among the half-breeds—or métis, as they are called—and Indians as among the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company and the white settlers. He had ever been credited with having a philosophical turn of mind; and this was accompanied by a certain strain of impulsiveness or daring. He had been accustomed all his life to make up his mind quickly and, because he was well enough off to bear the consequences of momentary rashness in commercial investments, he was not counted among the transgressors. He had his own fortune; he was not drawing upon a common purse. It was a different matter when he trafficked rashly in the family name so far as to marry the daughter of Eye-of-the-Moon, the Indian chief.

He was tolerably happy when he went to the Hudson's Bay country; for Miss Julia Sherwood was his promised wife, and she, if poor, was notably beautiful and of good family. His people had not looked quite kindly on this engagement; they had, indeed, tried in many ways to prevent it; partly because of Miss Sherwood's poverty, and also because they knew that Lady Agnes

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Martling had long cared for him, and was most happily endowed with wealth and good looks also. When he left for Canada they were inwardly glad (they imagined that something might occur to end the engagement) —all except Richard, the wiseacre of the family, the book-man, the drone, who preferred living at Greyhope, their Hertfordshire home, the year through, to spending half the time in Cavendish Square. Richard was very fond of Frank, admiring him immensely for his buxom strength and cleverness, and not a little, too, for that very rashness which had brought him such havoc at last.

Richard was not, as Frank used to say, "perfectly sound on his pins,"—that is, he was slightly lame,—but he was right at heart. He was an immense reader, but made little use of what he read. He had an abundant humour, and remembered every anecdote he ever heard. He was kind to the poor, walked much, talked to himself as he walked, and was known by the humble sort as "a 'centric." But he had a wise head, and he foresaw danger to Frank's happiness when he went away. While others had gossiped and manœuvred and were busily idle, he had watched things. He saw that Frank was dear to Julia in proportion to the distance between her and young Lord Haldwell, whose father had done something remarkable in guns or torpedoes and was rewarded with a lordship and an uncommonly large fortune. He also saw that, after Frank left, the distance between Lord Haldwell and Julia became distinctly less—they were both staying at Greyhope. Julia Sherwood was a remarkably clever girl. Though he felt it his duty to speak to her for his brother,—a difficult and delicate matter,—he thought it would come better from his mother.

But when he took action it was too late. Miss Sher-

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wood naïvely declared that she had not known her own heart, and that she did not care for Frank any more. She wept a little, and was soothed by motherly Mrs. Armour, who was inwardly glad, though she knew the matter would cause Frank pain; and even General Armour could not help showing slight satisfaction, though he was innocent of any deliberate action to separate the two. Straightway Miss Sherwood despatched a letter to the wilds of Canada, and for a week was an unengaged young person. But she was no doubt consoled by the fact that for some time past she had had complete control of Lord Haldwell's emotions. At the end of the week her perceptions were justified by Lord Haldwell's proposal, which, with admirable tact and obvious demureness, was accepted.

Now, Frank Armour was wandering much in the wilds, so that his letters and papers went careering about after him, and some that came first were last to reach him. That was how he received a newspaper announcing the marriage of Lord Haldwell and Julia Sherwood at the same time that her letter, written in estimable English and with admirable feeling, came, begging for a release from their engagement, and, towards its close, assuming, with a charming regret, that all was over, and that the last word had been said between them.

Armour was sitting in the trader's room at Fort Charles when the carrier came with the mails. He had had some successful days hunting buffalo with Eye-of-the-Moon and a little band of métis, had had a long *pow-wow* in Eye-of-the-Moon's lodge, had chatted gaily with Lali the daughter, and was now prepared to enjoy heartily the arrears of correspondence and news before him. He ran his hand through the letters and papers,

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intending to classify them immediately, according to such handwriting as he recognised and the dates on the envelopes. But, as he did so, he saw a newspaper from which the wrapper was partly torn. He also saw a note in the margin directing him to a certain page. The note was in Richard's handwriting. He opened the paper at the page indicated and saw the account of the marriage! His teeth clinched on his cigar, his face turned white, the paper fell from his fingers. He gasped, his hands spread out nervously, then caught the table and held it as though to steady himself.

The trader rose. "You are ill," he said. "Have you bad news?" He glanced towards the paper.

Slowly Armour folded the paper up, and then rose unsteadily. "Gordon," he said, "give me a glass of brandy."

He turned towards the cupboard in the room. The trader opened it, took out a bottle, and put it on the table beside Armour, together with a glass and some water. Armour poured out a stiff draught, added a very little water, and drank it. He drew a great sigh, and stood looking at the paper.

"Is there anything I can do for you, Mr. Armour?" urged the trader.

"Nothing, thank you, nothing at all. Just leave the brandy here, will you? I feel knocked about, and I have to go through the rest of these letters."

He ran his fingers through the pile, turning it over hastily, as if searching for something. The trader understood. He was a cool-headed Scotsman; he knew that there were some things best not inquired into, and that men must have their bad hours alone. He glanced at the brandy debatingly, but presently turned and left the room in silence. In his own mind,

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however, he wished he might have taken the brandy without being discourteous. Armour had discovered Miss Sherwood's letter. Before he opened it he took a little more brandy. Then he sat down and read it deliberately. The liquor had steadied him. The fingers of one hand even drummed on the table. But the face was drawn, the eyes were hard, and the look of him was altogether pinched. After he had finished this, he looked for others from the same hand. He found none. Then he picked out those from his mother and father. He read them grimly. Once he paused as he read his mother's letter, and took a gulp of plain brandy. There was something very like a sneer on his face when he finished reading. He read the hollowness of the sympathy extended to him; he understood the far from adroit references to Lady Agnes Martling. He was very bitter. He opened no more letters, but took up the *Morning Post* again, and read it slowly through. The look of his face was not pleasant. There was a small looking-glass opposite him. He caught sight of himself in it. He drew his hand across his eyes and forehead, as though he was in a miserable dream. He looked again; he could not recognise himself.

He then bundled the letters and papers into his despatch-box. His attention was drawn to one letter. He picked it up. It was from Richard. He started to break the seal, but paused. The strain of the event was too much; he winced. He determined not to read it then, to wait until he had recovered himself. He laughed now painfully. It had been better for him —it had, maybe, averted what people were used to term his tragedy—had he read his brother's letter at that moment. For Richard Armour was a man, notwithstanding his peculiarities; and

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most sensible words he ever wrote were in that letter thrust unceremoniously into Frank Armour's pocket.

Armour had received a terrible blow. He read his life backwards. He had no future. The liquor he had drunk had not fevered him, it had not wildly excited him; it merely drew him up to a point where he could put a sudden impulse into practice without flinching. He was bitter against his people; he credited them with more interference than was actual. He felt that happiness had gone out of his life and left him hopeless. As we said, he was a man of quick decisions. He would have made a dashing but reckless soldier; he was not without the elements of the gamester. It is possible that there was in him also a strain of cruelty, undeveloped but radical. Life so far had evolved the best in him; he had been cheery and candid. Now he travelled back into new avenues of his mind and found strange, aboriginal passions, fully adapted to the present situation. Vulgar anger and reproaches were not after his nature. He suddenly found sources of refined but desperate retaliation. He drew upon them. He would do something to humiliate his people and the girl who had spoiled his life. Some one thing! It should be absolute and lasting, it should show how low had fallen his opinion of women, of whom Julia Sherwood had once been chiefest to him. In that he would show his scorn of her. He would bring down the pride of his family, who, he believed, had helped, out of mere selfishness, to tumble his happiness into the shambles.

He was older by years than an hour ago. But he was not without the faculty of humour; that was why he did not become very excited; it was also why he determined upon a comedy which should have all the elements of tragedy. Perhaps, however, he would have hesitated

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to carry his purposes to immediate conclusions, were it not that the very gods seemed to play his game with him. For, while he stood there, looking out into the yard of the fort, a Protestant missionary passed the window. The Protestant missionary, as he is found at such places as Fort Charles, is not a strictly superior person. A Jesuit might have been of advantage to Frank Armour at that moment. The Protestant missionary is not above comfortable assurances of gold. So that when Armour summoned this one in, and told him what was required of him, and slipped a generous gift of the Queen's coin into his hand, he smiled vaguely and was willing to do what he was bidden. Had he been a Jesuit, who is sworn to poverty, and more often than not a man of birth and education, he might have influenced Frank Armour and prevented the notable mishap and scandal. As it was, Armour took more brandy.

Then he went down to Eye-of-the-Moon's lodge. A few hours afterwards the missionary met him there. The next morning Lali, the daughter of Eye-of-the-Moon, and the chieftainess of a portion of her father's tribe, whose grandfather had been a white man, was introduced to the Hudson's Bay country as Mrs. Frank Armour. But that was not all. Indeed, as it stood, it was very little. He had only made his comedy possible as yet; now the play itself was to come. He had carried his scheme through boldly so far. He would not flinch in carrying it out to the last letter. He brought his wife down to the Great Lakes immediately, scarcely resting day or night. There he engaged an ordinary but reliable woman, to whom he gave instructions, and sent the pair to the coast. He instructed his solicitor at Montreal to procure passages for Mrs. Francis Ar-

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mour and maid for Liverpool. Then, by letters, he instructed his solicitor in London to meet Mrs. Francis Armour and maid at Liverpool and take them to Greyhope in Hertfordshire—that is, if General Armour and Mrs. Armour, or some representative of the family, did not meet them when they landed from the steamship.

Presently he sat down and wrote to his father and mother, and asked them to meet his wife and her maid when they arrived by the steamer *Aphrodite*. He did not explain to them in precise detail his feelings on Miss Julia Sherwood's marriage, nor did he go into full particulars as to the personality of Mrs. Frank Armour; but he did say that, because he knew they were anxious that he should marry "acceptably," he had married into the aristocracy, the oldest aristocracy of America; and because he also knew they wished him to marry wealth, he sent them a wife rich in virtues—native, unspoiled virtues. He hoped that they would take her to their hearts and cherish her. He knew their firm principles of honour, and that he could trust them to be kind to his wife until he returned to share the affection which he was sure would be given to her. It was not his intention to return to England for some time yet. He had work to do in connection with his proposed colony; and a wife—even a native wife—could not well be a companion in the circumstances. Besides, Lali—his wife's name was Lali!—would be better occupied in learning the peculiarities of the life in which her future would be cast. It was possible they would find her an apt pupil. Of this they could not complain, that she was untravelled; for she had ridden a horse, bareback, half across the continent. They could not cavil at her education, for she knew several languages—aboriginal languages—of the North. She had merely to learn the

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dialect of English society, and how to carry with
able form the costumes of the race to which
going. Her own costume was picturesque, but it
appear unusual in London society. Still, they
use their own judgment about that.

Then, when she was gone beyond recall, he cha
one day to put on the coat he wore when the letter
paper declaring his misfortune came to him. He fou
his brother's letter; he opened it and read it. It
the letter of a man who knew how to appreciate at th
proper value the misfortunes, as the fortunes, of li
While Frank Armour read he came to feel for the fi
time that his brother Richard had suffered, maybe, fro
some such misery as had come to him through Juli
Sherwood. It was a dispassionate, manly letter, re-
lieved by gentle wit, and hinting with careful kindness
that a sudden blow was better for a man than a lifelong
thorn in his side. Of Julia Sherwood he had nothing
particularly bitter to say. He delicately suggested that
she had acted according to her nature, and that in the
see-saw of life Frank had had a sore blow; but this was
to be borne. The letter did not say too much; it did
not magnify the difficulty, it did not depreciate it.
It did not even directly counsel; it was wholesomely,
tenderly judicial. Indirectly, it dwelt upon the steadi-
ness and manliness of Frank's character; directly,
lightly, and without rhetoric, it enlarged upon their own
comradeship. It ran over pleasantly the days of their
**boyhood, when they were hardly ever separated. It
made distinct, yet with no obvious purpose, how good
were friendship and confidence—which might be the
most unselfish thing in the world—between two men.
With the letter before him Frank Armour saw his act in
a new light.**

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As we said, it is possible if he had read it on the day when his trouble came to him, he had not married Lali, or sent her to England on this—to her—involuntary mission of revenge. It is possible, also, that there came to him the first vague conception of the wrong he had done this Indian girl, who undoubtedly married him because she cared for him after her heathen fashion, while he had married her for nothing that was commendable; not even for passion, which may be pardoned, nor for vanity, which has its virtues. He had had his hour with circumstance; circumstance would have its hour with him in due course. Yet there was no extraordinary revulsion. He was still angry, cynical, and very sore. He would see the play out with a consistent firmness. He almost managed a smile when a letter was handed to him some weeks later, bearing his solicitor's assurance that Mrs. Frank Armour and her maid had been safely bestowed on the *Aphrodite* for England. This was the first act in his tragic comedy.

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CHAPTER II

A DIFFICULT SITUATION

WHEN Mrs. Frank Armour arrived at Montreal she still wore her Indian costume of clean, well-broidered buckskin, moccasins, and leggings, all surmounted by a blanket. It was not a distinguished costume, but it seemed suitable to its wearer. Mr. Armour's agent was in a quandary. He had received no instructions regarding her dress. He felt, of course, that, as Mrs. Frank Armour, she should put off these garments, and dress, so far as was possible, in accordance with her new position. But when he spoke about it to Mackenzie, the elderly maid and companion, he found that Mr. Armour had said that his wife was to arrive in England dressed as she was. He saw something ulterior in the matter, but it was not his province to interfere. And so Mrs. Frank Armour was a passenger by the *Aphrodite* in her buckskin garments.

What she thought of it all is not quite easy to say. It is possible that at first she only considered that she was the wife of a white man,—a thing to be desired,—and that the man she loved was hers for ever—a matter of indefinable joy to her. That he was sending her to England did not fret her, because it was his will, and he knew what was best. Busy with her contented and yet somewhat dazed thoughts of him,—she was too happy to be very active mentally, even if it had been the characteristic of her race,—she was not at first aware how much notice she excited, and how strange a figure she

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was in this staring city. When it did dawn upon her she shrank a little, but still was placid, preferring to sit with her hands folded in her lap, idly watching things. She appeared oblivious that she was the wife of a man of family and rank; she was only thinking that the man was hers—all hers. He had treated her kindly enough in the days they were together, but she had not been a great deal with him, because they travelled fast, and his duties were many, or he made them so—but the latter possibility did not occur to her.

When he had hastily bidden her farewell at Port Arthur he had kissed her and said: "Good-bye, my wife." She was not yet acute enough in the inflections of Saxon speech to catch the satire—almost involuntary—in the last two words. She remembered the words, however, and the kiss, and she was quite satisfied. To what she was going she did not speculate. He was sending her: that was enough.

The woman given to her as maid had been well chosen. Armour had done this carefully. She was Scotch, was reserved, had a certain amount of shrewdness, would obey instructions, and do her duty carefully. What she thought about the whole matter she kept to herself; even the solicitor at Montreal could not find out. She had her instructions clear in her mind; she was determined to carry them out to the letter—for which she was already well paid, and was like to be better paid; because Armour had arranged that she should continue to be with his wife after they got to England. She understood well the language of Lali's tribe, and because Lali's English was limited she would be indispensable in England.

Mackenzie, therefore, had responsibility, and if she was not elated over it, she still knew the importance of

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her position, and had enough practical vanity to make her an efficient servant and companion. She already felt that she had got her position in life, from which she was to go out no more for ever. She had been brought up in the shadow of Alnwick Castle, and she knew what was due to her charge—by other people; herself only should have liberty with her. She was taking Lali to the home of General Armour, and that must be kept constantly before her mind. Therefore, from the day they set foot on the *Aphrodite*, she kept her place beside Mrs. Armour, sitting with her,—they walked very little,—and scarcely ever speaking, either to her or to the curious passengers. Presently the passengers became more inquisitive, and made many attempts at being friendly; but these received little encouragement. It had become known who the Indian girl was, and many wild tales went about as to her marriage with Francis Armour. Now it was maintained she had saved his life at an outbreak of her tribe; again, that she had found him dying in the woods and had nursed him back to life and health; yet again, that she was a chieftainess, a successful claimant against the Hudson's Bay Company—and so on.

There were several on board who knew the Armours well by name, and two who knew them personally. One was Mr. Edward Lambert, a barrister of the Middle Temple, and the other was Mrs. Townley, a widow, a member of a well-known Hertfordshire family, who, on a pleasant journey in Scotland, had met, conquered, and married a wealthy young American, and had been left alone in the world, by no means portionless, eighteen months before. Lambert knew Richard Armour well, and when, from Francis Armour's solicitor, with whom he was acquainted, he heard, just before they started,

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who the Indian girl was, he was greatly shocked and sorry. He guessed at once the motive, the madness, of this marriage. But he kept his information and his opinions mostly to himself, except in so far as it seemed only due to friendship to contradict the numberless idle stories going about. After the first day at sea he came to know Mrs. Townley, and when he discovered that they had many common friends and that she knew the Armours, he spoke a little more freely to her regarding the Indian wife, and told her what he believed was the cause of the marriage.

Mrs. Townley was a woman—a girl—of uncommon gentleness of disposition, and, in spite of her troubles, inclined to view life with a sunny eye. She had known of Frank Armour's engagement with Miss Julia Sherwood, but she had never heard the sequel. If this was the sequel—well, it had to be faced. But she was almost tremulous with sympathy when she remembered Mrs. Armour, and Frank's gay, fashionable sister Marion, and contemplated the arrival of this Indian girl at Greyhope. She had always liked Frank Armour, but this made her angry with him; for, on second thoughts, she was not more sorry for him and for his people than for Lali, the wife. She had the true instinct of womanhood, and she supposed that a heathen like this could have feelings to be hurt and a life to be wounded as herself or another. At least she saw what was possible in the future when this Indian girl came to understand her position—only to be accomplished by contact with the new life, so different from her past. Both she and Lambert decided that she was very fine-looking, notwithstanding her costume. She was [illegible]

gent, her features distinguished. She was a goodly product of her race, being descended from a line of chiefs and chieftainesses—broken only in the case of her grandfather, as has been mentioned. Her hands (the two kindly inquisitors decided) were almost her best point. They were perfectly made, slim, yet plump, the fingers tapering, the wrist supple. Mrs. Townley then and there decided that the girl had possibilities. But here she was, an Indian, with few signs of civilisation or of that breeding which seems to white people the only breeding fit for earth or heaven.

Mrs. Townley did not need Lambert's suggestion that she should try to approach the girl, make friends with her, and prepare her in some slight degree for the strange career before her.

Mrs. Townley had an infinite amount of tact. She knew it was best to approach the attendant first. This she did, and, to the surprise of other lady-passengers, received no rebuff. Her advance was not, however, rapid. Mackenzie had had her instructions. When she found that Mrs. Townley knew Francis Armour and his people, she thawed a little more, and then, very hesitatingly, she introduced her to the Indian wife. Mrs. Townley smiled her best—and there were many who knew how attractive she could be at such a moment. There was a slight pause, in which Lali looked at her meditatively, earnestly, and then those beautiful wild fingers glided out, and caught her hand, and held it; but she spoke no word. She only looked inquiringly, seriously, at her new-found friend, and presently dropped the blanket away from her, and sat up firmly, as though she felt she was not altogether an alien now, and had a right to hold herself proudly among white people, as she did in her own country and with her own

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than she had lost a soft little spontaneous laugh which was one of her unusual charms—for few women can laugh audibly with effect. She laughed very softly now, and, her sense of humour supervening for the moment, she said:

"Really, you have asked me a conundrum. I fancy I see Mrs. Armour's face when she gets the news,—at the breakfast-table, of course,—and gives a little shriek, and says: 'General! oh, General!' But it is all very shocking, you know," she added, in a lower voice. "Still I think they will receive her and do the best they can for her; because, you see, there she is, married hard and fast. She bears the Armour name, and is likely to make them all very unhappy, indeed, if she determines to retaliate upon them for any neglect."

"Yes. But how to retaliate, Mrs. Townley?" Lambert had not a suggestive mind.

"Well, for instance, suppose they sent her away into seclusion,—with Frank's consent, another serious question,—and she should take the notion to fly her retirement, and appear inopportunely at some social function clothed as she is now! I fancy her blanket would be a wet one in such a case—if you will pardon the little joke."

Lambert sighed. "Poor Frank—poor devil!" he said, almost beneath his breath.

"And wherefore poor Frank? Do you think he or the Armours of Greyhope are the only ones at stake in this? What about this poor girl? Just think why he married her,—if our suspicions are right,—and then imagine her feelings when she wakes to the truth over there, as some time she is sure to do!"

Then Lambert began to see the matter in a different light, and his sympathy for Francis Armour grew less

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as his pity for the girl increased. In fact, the day before they got to Liverpool he swore at Armour more than once, and was anxious concerning the reception of the heathen wife by her white relatives.

Had he been present at a certain scene at Greyhope a day or two before, he would have been still more anxious. It was the custom, at breakfast, for Mrs. Armour to open her husband's letters and read them while he was engaged with his newspaper, and hand to him afterwards those that were important. This morning Marion noticed a letter from Frank amongst the pile, and, without a word, pounced upon it. She was curious—as any woman would be—to see how he took Miss Sherwood's action. Her father was deep in his paper at the time. Her mother was reading other letters. Marion read the first few lines with a feeling of almost painful wonder, the words were so curious, cynical, and cold.

Richard sat opposite her. He also was engaged with his paper, but, chancing to glance up, he saw that she was becoming very pale, and that the letter trembled in her fingers. Being a little short-sighted, he was not near enough to see the handwriting. He did not speak yet. He watched. Presently, seeing her grow more excited, he touched her foot under the table. She looked up, and caught his eye. She gasped slightly. She gave him a warning look, and turned away from her mother. Then she went on reading to the bitter end. Presently a little cry escaped her against her will. At that her mother looked up, but she only saw her daughter's back, as she rose hurriedly from the table, saying that she would return in a moment. Mrs. Armour, however, had been startled. She knew that Marion had been reading a letter, and, with a mother's instinct,

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her thoughts were instantly on Frank. She spoke quickly, almost sharply:

"Marion, come here."

Richard had risen. He came round the table, and, as the girl obeyed her mother, took the letter from her fingers and hastily glanced over it. Mrs. Armour came forward and took her daughter's arm. "Marion," she said, "there is something wrong—with Frank. What is it?"

General Armour was now looking up at them all, curiously, questioningly, through his glasses, his paper laid down, his hands resting on the table.

Marion could not answer. She was sick with regret, vexation, and shame; at the first flush, death—for Frank—had been preferable to this. She had a considerable store of vanity; she was not very philosophical. Besides, she was not married; and what Captain Vidall, her devoted admirer and possible husband, would think of this heathenish alliance was not a cheerful thought to her. She choked down a sob, and waved her hand towards Richard to answer for her. He was pale too, but cool. He understood the case instantly; he made up his mind instantly also as to what ought to be—must be—done.

"Well, mother," he said, "it is about Frank. But he is all right; that is, he is alive and well—in body. But he has arranged a hateful little embarrassment for us—he is married."

"Married!" exclaimed his mother faintly. "Oh, poor Lady Agnes!"

Marion sniffed a little viciously at this.

"Married? Married?" said his father. "Well, what about it? eh? what about it?"

The mother wrung her hands. "Oh, I know it is

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something dreadful—dreadful! He has married some horrible wild person, or something."

Richard, miserable as he was, remained calm. "Well," said he, "I don't know about her being horrible. Frank is silent on that point; but she is wild enough—a wild Indian, in fact."

"Indian? Indian? Good God—a red nigger!" cried General Armour harshly, starting to his feet.

"An Indian? a wild Indian?" Mrs. Armour whispered faintly, as she dropped into a chair.

"And she'll be here in two or three days," fluttered Marion hysterically.

Meanwhile Richard had hastily picked up the *Times*. "She is due here the day after to-morrow," he said deliberately. "Frank is as decisive as he is rash. Well, it's a melancholy tit-for-tat."

"What do you mean by tit-for-tat?" cried his father angrily.

"Oh, I mean that—that we tried to hasten Julia's marriage—with the other fellow, and he is giving us one in return; and you will all agree that it's a pretty permanent one."

The old soldier recovered himself, and was beside his wife in an instant. He took her hand. "Don't fret about it, wife," he said; "it's an ugly business, but we must put up with it. The boy was out of his head. We are old, now, my dear, but there was a time when we should have resented such a thing as much as Frank—though not in the same fashion, perhaps—not in the same fashion." The old man pressed his lips hard to keep down his emotion.

"Oh, how could he—how could he!" said his mother: "we meant everything for the best."

"It is always dangerous business meddling with lovers' affairs," rejoined Richard. "Lovers take them-

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selves very seriously indeed, and—well, here the thing is! Now, who will go and fetch her from Liverpool? I should say that both my father and my mother ought to go."

Thus Richard took it for granted that they would receive Frank's Indian wife into their home. He intended that, so far as he was concerned, there should be no doubt upon the question from the beginning.

"Never—she shall never come here!" said Marion, with flashing eyes;—"a common squaw, with greasy hair, and blankets, and big mouth, and black teeth, who eats with her fingers and grunts! If she does, if she is brought to Greyhope, I will never show my face in the world again. Frank married the animal: why does he ship her home to us? Why didn't he come with her? Why does he not take her to a home of his own? Why should he send her here, to turn our house into a menagerie?"

Marion drew her skirt back, as if the common squaw, with her blankets and grease, was at that moment near her.

"Well, you see," continued Richard, "that is just it. As I said, Frank arranged this little complication with a trifling amount of malice. No doubt he didn't come with her because he wished to test the family loyalty and hospitality; but a postscript to this letter says that his solicitor has instructions to meet his wife at Liverpool, and bring her on here in case we fail to show her proper courtesy."

General Armour here spoke. "He has carried the war of retaliation very far indeed, but men do mad things when their blood is up, as I have seen often. That doesn't alter our clear duty in the matter. If the woman were bad, or shameful, it would be a different thing; if—"

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Marion interrupted: "She has ridden bareback across the continent like a jockey,—like a common jockey,—and she wears a blanket, and she doesn't know a word of English, and she will sit on the floor!"

"Well," said her father, "all these things are not sins, and she must be taught better."

"Joseph, how can you?" said Mrs. Armour indignantly. "She cannot, she shall not come here. Think of Marion. Think of our position."

She hid her troubled, tear-stained face behind her handkerchief. At the same time she grasped her husband's hand. She knew that he was right. She honoured him in her heart for the position he had taken, but she could not resist the natural impulse of a woman where her taste and convention were shocked.

The old man was very pale, but there was no mistaking his determination. He had been more indignant than any of them, at first, but he had an unusual sense of justice when he got face to face with it, as Richard had here helped him to do. "We do not know that the woman has done any wrong," he said. "As for our name and position, they, thank God! are where a mad marriage cannot unseat them. We have had much prosperity in the world, my wife; we have had neither death nor dishonour; we—"

"If this isn't dishonour, father, what is?" Marion flashed out.

He answered calmly. "My daughter, it is a great misfortune, it will probably be a lifelong trial, but it is not necessarily dishonour."

"You never can make a scandal less by trying to hide it," said Richard, backing up his father. "It is all pretty awkward, but I daresay we shall get some amusement out of it in the end."

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"Richard," said his mother through her tears, "you are flippant and unkind!"

"Indeed, mother," was his reply, "I never was more serious in my life. When I spoke of amusement, I meant comedy merely, not fun—the thing that looks like tragedy and has a happy ending. That is what I mean, mother, nothing more."

"You are always so very deep, Richard," remarked Marion ironically, "and care so very little how the rest of us feel about things. You have no family pride. If you had married a squaw, we shouldn't have been surprised. You could have camped in the grounds with your wild woman, and never have been missed—by the world," she hastened to add, for she saw a sudden pain in his face.

He turned from them all a little wearily, and limped over to the window. He stood looking out into the limes where he and Frank had played when boys. He put his finger up, his unhandsome finger, and caught away some moisture from his eyes. He did not dare to let them see his face, nor yet to speak. Marion had cut deeper than she knew, and he would carry the wound for many a day before it healed.

But his sister felt instantly how cruel she had been, as she saw him limp away, and caught sight of the bowed shoulders and the prematurely grey hair. Her heart smote her. She ran over, and impulsively put her hands on his shoulder. "Oh, Dick," she said, "forgive me, Dick! I didn't mean it. I was angry and foolish and hateful."

He took one of her hands as it rested on his shoulder, she standing partly behind him, and raised it to his lips, but he did not turn to her; he could not.

"It is all right—all right," he said; "it doesn't make

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any difference. Let us think of Frank and what we have got to do. Let us stand together, Marion; that is best."

But her tears were dropping on his shoulder, as her forehead rested on her hand. He knew now that, whatever Frank's wife was, she would not have an absolute enemy here; for when Marion cried her heart was soft. She was clay in the hands of the potter whom we call Mercy—more often a stranger to the hearts of women than of men. At the other side of the room also the father and mother, tearless now, watched these two; and the mother saw her duty better and with less rebelliousness. She had felt it from the first, but she could not bring her mind to do it. They held each other's hands in silence. Presently General Armour said: "Richard, your mother and I will go to Liverpool to meet Frank's wife."

Marion shuddered a little, and her hands closed on Richard's shoulder, but she said nothing.

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CHAPTER III

OUT OF THE NORTH

It was a beautiful day—which was so much in favour Mrs. Frank Armour in relation to her husband's pe ple. General Armour and his wife had come dow from London by the latest train possible, that the suspense at Liverpool might be short. They said litt to each other, but when they did speak it was of thing very different from the skeleton which they expected to put into the family cupboard presently. Each was trying to spare the other. It was very touching. They naturally looked upon the matter in its most unpromising light, because an Indian was an Indian, and this unknown savage from Fort Charles was in violent contrast to such desirable persons as Lady Agnes Martling. Not that the Armours were zealous for mere money and title, but the thing itself was altogether *à propos*, as Mrs. Armour had more naïvely than correctly put it. The general, whose knowledge of character and the circumstances of life was considerable, had worked out the thing with much accuracy. He had declared to Richard, in their quiet talk upon the subject, that Frank must have been anything but sober when he did it. He had previously called it a policy of retaliation; so that now he was very near the truth. When they arrived at the dock at Liverpool, the *Aphrodite* was just making into the harbour.

"Egad," said General Armour to himself, "Sebastopol was easier than this; for fighting I know, and

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being peppered I know, by Jews, Greeks, infidels, and heretics; but to take a savage to my arms and do for her what her godfathers and godmothers never did, is worse than the devil's dance at Delhi."

What Mrs. Armour, who was not quite so definite as her husband, thought, it would be hard to tell; but probably grief for, and indignation at, her son, were uppermost in her mind. She had quite determined upon her course. None could better carry that high, neutral look of social superiority than she.

Please Heaven, she said to herself, no one should see that her equanimity was shaken. They had brought one servant with them, who had been gravely and yet conventionally informed that his young master's wife, an Indian chieftainess, was expected. There are few family troubles but find their way to servants' hall with an uncomfortable speed; for, whether or not stone walls have ears, certainly men-servants and maid-servants have eyes that serve for ears, and ears that do more than their bounden duty. Boulter, the footman, knew his business. When informed of the coming of Mrs. Francis Armour, the Indian chieftainess, his face was absolutely expressionless; his "Yessir" was as mechanical as usual. On the dock he was marble—indifferent. When the passengers began to land, he showed no excitement. He was decorously alert. When the crucial moment came, he was imperturbable. Boulter was an excellent servant. So said Edward Lambert to himself after the event; so, likewise, said Mrs. Townley to herself when the thing was over; so declared General Armour many a time after, and once very emphatically, just before he raised Boulter's wages.

As the boat neared Liverpool, Lambert and Mrs. Townley grew nervous. The truth regarding the

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Indian wife had become known among the passengers, and most were very curious—some in a well-bred fashion, some intrusively, vulgarly. Mackenzie, Lali's companion, like Boulter, was expressionless in face. She had her duty to do, paid for liberally, and she would do it. Lali might have had a more presentable and dignified attendant, but not one more worthy. It was noticeable that the captain of the ship and all the officers had been markedly courteous to Mrs. Armour throughout the voyage, but, to their credit, not ostentatiously so. When the vessel was brought to anchor and the passengers were being put upon the tender, the captain came and made his respectful adieus, as though Lali were a lady of title in her own right, and not an Indian girl married to a man acting under the influence of brandy and malice. General Armour and Mrs. Armour were always grateful to Lambert and Mrs. Townley for the part they played in this desperate little comedy. They stood still and watchful as the passengers came ashore one by one. They saw that they were the centre of unusual interest, but General Armour was used to bearing himself with a grim kind of indifference in public, and his wife was calm, and so somewhat disappointed those who probably expected the old officer and his wife to be distressed. Frank Armour's solicitor was also there, but, with good taste, he held aloof. The two needed all their courage, however, when they saw a figure in buckskin and blanket step upon the deck, attended by a very ordinary, austere, and shabbily-dressed Scotswoman. But immediately behind them were Edward Lambert and Mrs. Townley, and these, with their simple tact, naturalness, and freedom from any sort of embarrassment, acted as foils, and relieved the situation.

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General Armour advanced, hat in hand. "You are my son's wife?" he said courteously to this being in a blanket.

She looked up and shook her head slightly, for she did not quite understand; but she recognised his likeness to her husband, and presently she smiled up musingly. Mackenzie repeated to her what General Armour had said. She nodded now, a flash of pleasure lighting up her face, and she slid out her beautiful hand to him. The general took it and pressed it mechanically, his lips twitching slightly. He pressed it far harder than he meant, for his feelings were at tension. She winced slightly, and involuntarily thrust out her other hand, as if to relieve his pressure. As she did so the blanket fell away from her head and shoulders. Lambert, with excellent intuition, caught it, and threw it across his arm. Then, quickly, and without embarrassment, he and Mrs. Townley greeted General Armour, who returned the greetings gravely, but in a singular, confidential tone, which showed his gratitude. Then he raised his hat again to Lali, and said: "Come and let me introduce you—to your husband's mother."

The falling back of that blanket had saved the situation; for when the girl stood without it in her buckskin garments there was a dignity in her bearing which carried off the bizarre event. There was timidity in her face, and yet a kind of pride too, though she was only a savage. The case, even at this critical moment, did not seem quite hopeless. When they came to Mrs. Armour, Lali shrank away timidly from the look in the mother's eyes, and, shivering slightly, looked round for her blanket. But Lambert had deftly passed it on to the footman. Presently Mrs. Armour took both the girl's hands in hers (perhaps she did it because the eyes

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of the public were on
there—she did it), and
they moved away to a

And that was the
comedy of errors.

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CHAPTER IV

IN THE NAME OF THE FAMILY

THE journey from Liverpool to Greyhope was passed in comparative silence. The Armours had a compartment to themselves, and they made the Indian girl as comfortable as possible without self-consciousness, without any artificial politeness. So far, what they had done was a matter of duty, not of will; but they had done their duty naturally all their lives, and it was natural to them now. They had no personal feelings towards the girl one way or another, as yet. It was trying to them that people stared into the compartment at different stations. It presently dawned upon General Armour that it might also be trying to their charge. Neither he nor his wife had taken into account the possibility of the girl having feelings to be hurt. But he had noticed Lali shrink visibly and flush slightly when some one stared harder than usual, and this troubled him. It opened up a possibility. He began indefinitely to see that they were not the only factors in the equation. He was probably a little vexed that he had not seen it before; for he wished to be a just man. He was wont to quote with more or less austerity—chiefly the result of his professional life—this:

"For justice, all place a temple, and all season summer."

And, man of war as he was, he had another saying which was much in his mouth; and he lived up to it with considerable sincerity:

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"Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace,
To silence envious tongues."

He whispered to his wife. It would have been hard to tell from her look what she thought of the matter, but presently she changed seats with her husband, that he might, by holding his newspaper at a certain angle, shield the girl from intrusive gazers.

At every station the same scene was enacted. And inquisitive people must have been surprised to see how monotonously ordinary was the manner of the three white people in the compartment. Suddenly, at a station near London, General Armour gave a start, and used a strong expression under his breath. Glancing at the "Marriage" column, he saw a notice to the effect that on a certain day of a certain month, Francis Gilbert, the son of General Joseph Armour, C.B., of Greyhope, Hertfordshire, and Cavendish Square, was married to Lali, the daughter of Eye-of-the-Moon, chief of the Bloods, at her father's lodge in the Saskatchewan Valley. This had been inserted by Frank Armour's solicitor, according to his instructions, on the day that the *Aphrodite* was due at Liverpool. General Armour did not at first intend to show this to his wife, but on second thought he did, because he knew she would eventually come to know of it, and also because she saw that something had moved him. She silently reached out her hand for the paper. He handed it to her, pointing to the notice.

Mrs. Armour was unhappy, but her self-possession was admirable, and she said nothing. She turned her face to the window, and sat for a long time looking out. She did not turn to the others, for her eyes were full of tears, and she did not dare to wipe them away, nor yet

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to let them be seen. She let them dry there. She was thinking of her son, her favourite son, for whom she had been so ambitious, and for whom, so far as she could, and retain her self-respect, she had delicately intrigued, that he might happily and befittingly marry. She knew that in the matter of his engagement she had not done what was best for him, but how could she have guessed that this would be the result? She also was sure that when the first flush of his anger and disappointment had passed, and he came to view this thing with cooler mind, he would repent deeply—for a whole lifetime. She was convinced that he had not married this savage for anything which could make marriage endurable. Under the weight of the thought she was likely to forget that the young alien wife might have lost terribly in the event also.

The arrival at Euston and the departure from St. Pancras were rather painful all round, for, though there was no waiting at either place, the appearance of an Indian girl in native costume was uncommon enough, even in cosmopolitan London, to draw much attention. Besides, the placards of the evening papers were blazoned with such announcements as this:

A Red Indian Girl
Married into
An English County Family.

Some one had telegraphed particulars—distorted particulars—over from Liverpool, and all the evening sheets had their portion of extravagance and sensation. General Armour became a little more erect and austere as he caught sight of these placards, and Mrs. Armour groaned inwardly; but their faces were inscrutable, and

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they quietly conducted their charge, *minus* her blanket, to the train which was to take them to St. Albans, and were soon wheeling homeward.

At Euston they parted with Lambert and Mrs. Townley, who quite simply and conventionally bade good-bye to them and their Indian daughter-in-law. Lali had grown to like Mrs. Townley, and when they parted she spoke a few words quickly in her own tongue, and then immediately was confused, because she remembered that she could not be understood. But presently she said in halting English that the face of her white friend was good, and she hoped that she would come one time and sit beside her in her wigwam, for she would be sad till her husband travelled to her.

Mrs. Townley made some polite reply in simple English, pressed the girl's hand sympathetically, and hurried away. Before she parted from Mr. Lambert, however, she said, with a pretty touch of cynicism: "I think I see Marion Armour listening to her sister-in-law issue invitations to her wigwam. I am afraid I should be rather depressed myself if I had to be sisterly to a wigwam lady."

"But I say, Mrs. Townley," rejoined Lambert seriously, as he loitered at the steps of her carriage, "I shouldn't be surprised if my Lady Wigwam—a rather apt and striking title, by the way—turned out better than we think. She carried herself rippingly without the blanket, and I never saw a more beautiful hand in my life—but one," he added, as his fingers at that moment closed on hers, and held them tightly, in spite of the indignant little effort at withdrawal. "She may yet be able to give them all points in dignity and that kind of thing, and pay Master Frank back in his own coin. I do not see, after all, that he is the martyr."

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Lambert's voice got softer, for he still held Mrs. Townley's fingers,—the footman not having the matter in his eye,—and then he spoke still more seriously on sentimental affairs of his own, in which he evidently hoped she would take some interest. Indeed, it is hard to tell how far the case might have been pushed if she had not suddenly looked a little forbidding and imperious. For even people of no notable height, with soft features, dark brown eyes, and a delightful little laugh, may appear rather regal at times. Lambert did not quite understand why she should take this attitude. If he had been as keen regarding his own affairs of the affections as in the case of Frank Armour and his Indian bride, he had known that every woman has in her mind the occasion when she should and when she should not be wooed, and nothing disappoints her more than a declaration at a time which is not *her* time. If it does not fall out as she wishes it, retrospect, a dear thing to a woman, is spoiled. Many a man has been sent to the right-about because he has ventured his proposal at the wrong time. What would have occurred to Lambert it is hard to tell; but he saw that something was wrong, and stopped in time.

When General Armour and his party reached Greyhope it was late in the evening. The girl seemed tired and confused by the events of the day, and did as she was directed, indifferently, limply. But when they entered the gates of Greyhope and travelled up the long avenue of limes, she looked round her somewhat eagerly, and drew a long sigh, maybe of relief or pleasure. She presently stretched out a hand almost caressingly to the thick trees and the grass, and said aloud: "Oh, the beautiful trees and the long grass!" There was a whirr of birds' wings among the branches,

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and then, presently, there rose from a distance the sweet, gurgling whistle of the nightingale. A smile as of reminiscence crossed her face. Then she said, as if to herself: "It is the same. I shall not die. I hear the birds' wings, and one is singing. It is pleasant to sleep in the long grass when the nights are summer, and to hang your cradle in the trees."

She had asked for her own blanket, refusing a rug, when they left St. Albans, and it had been given to her. She drew it about her now with a feeling of comfort, and seemed to lose the horrible sense of strangeness which had almost convulsed her when she was put into the carriage at the railway station. Her reserve had hidden much of what she really felt; but the drive through the limes had shown General Armour and his wife that they had to do with a nature having capacities for sensitive feeling; which, it is sometimes thought, is only the prerogative of certain well-bred civilisations.

But it was impossible that they should yet, or for many a day, feel any sense of kinship with this aboriginal girl. Presently the carriage drew up to the doorway, which was instantly opened to them. A broad belt of light streamed out upon the stone steps. Far back in the hall stood Marion, one hand upon the balustrade of the staircase, the other tightly held at her side, as if to nerve herself for the meeting. The eyes of the Indian girl pierced the light, and, as if by a strange instinct, found those of Marion, even before she left the carriage. Lali felt vaguely that here was her possible enemy. As she stepped out of the carriage, General Armour's hand under her elbow to assist her, she drew her blanket something more closely about her, and so proceeded up the steps. The composure of the

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servants was, in the circumstances, remarkable. It needed to have been, for the courage displayed by Lali's two new guardians during the day almost faltered at the threshold of their own home. Any sign of surprise or amusement on the part of the domestics would have given them some painful moments subsequently. But all was perfectly decorous. Marion still stood motionless, almost dazed. The group advanced into the hall, and there paused, as if waiting for her.

At that moment Richard came out of the study at her right hand, took her arm, and said quietly: "Come along, Marion. Let us be as brave as our father and mother."

She gave a hard little gasp and seemed to awake as from a dream. She quickly glided forwards ahead of him, kissed her mother and father almost abruptly, then turned to the young wife with a scrutinising eye.

"Marion," said her father, "this is your sister."

Marion stood hesitating, confused.

"Marion, dear," repeated her mother ceremoniously, "this is your brother's wife.—Lali, this is your husband's sister, Marion."

Mackenzie translated the words swiftly to the girl, and her eyes flashed wide. Then in a low voice she said in English: "Yes, Marion, *How!*"

It is probable that neither Marion nor any one present knew quite the meaning of *How*, save Richard, and he could not suppress a smile, it sounded so absurd and aboriginal. But at this exclamation Marion once more came to herself. She could not possibly go so far as her mother did at the dock and kiss this savage, but, with a rather sudden grasp of the hand, she said, a little hysterically,—for her brain was going round like a wheel,—"Wo-won't you let me take your blan-

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ket?" and forthwith laid hold of it with tremulous politeness.

The question sounded, for the instant, so ludicrous to Richard that, in spite of the distressing situation, he had to choke back a laugh. Years afterwards, if he wished for any momentary revenge upon Marion (and he had a keen sense of wordy retaliation), he simply said: "Wo-won't you let me take your blanket?"

Of course the Indian girl did not understand, but she submitted to the removal of this uncommon mantle, and stood forth a less trying sight to Marion's eyes; for, as we said before, her buckskin costume set off softly the good outlines of her form.

The Indian girl's eyes wandered from Marion to Richard. They wandered from anxiety, doubt, and a bitter kind of reserve, to cordiality, sympathy, and a grave kind of humour. Instantly the girl knew that she had in eccentric Richard Armour a frank friend. Unlike as he was to his brother, there was still in their eyes the same friendliness and humanity. That is, it was the same look that Frank carried when he first came to her father's lodge.

Richard held out his hand with a cordial little laugh and said: "Ah, ah, very glad, very glad! Just in time for supper. Come along. How is Frank, eh? how is Frank? Just so; just so. Pleasant journey, I suppose?" He shook her hand warmly three or four times, and, as he held it, placed his left hand over it and patted it patriarchally, as was his custom with all the children and all the old ladies that he knew.

"Richard," said his mother, in a studiously neutral voice, "you might see about the wine."

Then Richard appeared to recover himself, and did as he was requested, but not until his brother's wife

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had said to him in English, as they courteously drew her towards the staircase: "Oh, my brother Richard, *How!*"

But the first strain and suspense were now over for the family, and it is probable that never had they felt such relief as when they sat down behind closed doors in their own rooms for a short respite, while the Indian girl was closeted alone with Mackenzie and a trusted maid, in what she called her wigwam.

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CHAPTER V

AN AWKWARD HALF-HOUR

It is just as well, perhaps, that the matter had become notorious. Otherwise the Armours had lived in that unpleasant condition of being constantly "discovered." It was simply a case of aiming at absolute secrecy, which had been frustrated by Frank himself, or bold and unembarrassed acknowledgment and an attempt to carry things off with a high hand. The latter course was the only one possible. It had originally been Richard's idea, appropriated by General Armour, and accepted by Mrs. Armour and Marion with what grace was possible. The publication of the event prepared their friends, and precluded the necessity for reserve. What the friends did not know was whether they ought or ought not to commiserate the Armours. It was a difficult position. A death, an accident, a lost reputation, would have been easy to them; concerning these there could be no doubt. But an Indian daughter-in-law, a person in moccasins, was scarcely a thing to be congratulated upon; and yet sympathy and consolation might be much misplaced; no one could tell how the Armours would take it. For even their closest acquaintances knew what kind of delicate hauteur was possible to them. Even the "'centric" Richard, who visited the cottages of the poor, carrying soup and luxuries of many kinds, accompanying them with the most wholesome advice a single man ever gave to families and the heads of families, whose laugh was

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so cheery and spontaneous—at [illegible] uncommonly grave and sad at times—[illegible] for manner. With astonishing suddenness [illegible] insurmountable barriers; and people [illegible] who occasionally presumed on his simplicity of life and habits, found themselves put [illegible] at ease by a quiet, curious look in his eye. No man was ever more the recluse and at the same time the man of the world. He had had his bitter little comedy of life, but it was different from that of his brother Frank. It was buried very deep; not one of his family knew of it: Edward Lambert, and one or two others who had good reason never to speak of it, were the only persons possessing his secret.

But all England knew of Frank's *mésalliance*. And the question was, What would people do? They [illegible] properly did nothing at first. They waited to see how the Armours would act: they did not congratulate [illegible] did not console; that was left to those [illegible] chanced to resent General Armour's politics, and [illegible] others which were emotional and sensational [illegible] subject—particularly so where women were [illegible]

It was the beginning of the season, but the [illegible] had decided that they would not go to town. [illegible] is, the general and his wife were not going. They [illegible] that they ought to be at Greyhope with their daughter-in-law—which was to their credit. Regarding [illegible] they had nothing to say. Mrs. Armour [illegible] going to town for the season, to visit Mrs. Townley, who had thoughtfully written to her, saying that she was very lonely, and begging Mrs. Armour to [illegible] come, if she would. She said that of course Marion would see much of her people in town, [illegible] Mrs. Townley was a [illegible]

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She guessed that General Armour and his wife were not likely to come to town, but that must not appear, and the invitation should be on a different basis—as it was.

It is probable that Marion saw through the delicate plot, but that did not make her like Mrs. Townley less. These little pieces of art make life possible, these tender fictions!

Marion was, however, not in good humour; she was nervous and a little petulant. She had a high-strung temperament, a sensitive perception of the fitness of things, and a horror of what was *gauche;* and she would, in brief, make a rather austere person if the lines of life did not run in her favour. She had something of Frank's impulsiveness and temper; it would have been a great blessing to her if she had had a portion of Richard's philosophical humour also. She was at a point of tension—her mother and Richard could see that. She was anxious—though for the world she would not have had it thought so—regarding Captain Vidall. She had never cared for anybody but him; it was possible she never would. But he did not know this, and she was not absolutely sure that his evident but as yet informal love would stand this strain—which shows how people very honourable and perfect-minded in themselves may allow a large margin to other people who are presumably honourable and perfect-minded also. There was no engagement between them, and he was not bound in any way, and could, therefore, without slashing the hem of the code, retire without any apology; but they had had that unspoken understanding which most people who love each other show even before a word of declaration has passed their lips. If he withdrew because of this scandal there

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might be some awkward hours for Frank Armour's wife at Greyhope; but, more than that, there would be a very hard-hearted young lady to play her part in the deceitful world; she would be as merciless as she could be. Naturally, being young, she exaggerated the importance of the event, and brooded on it. It was different with her father and mother. They were shocked and indignant at first, but when the first scene had been faced they began to make the best of things all round. That is, they proceeded at once to turn the North American Indian into a European—a matter of no little difficulty. A governess was discussed; but General Armour did not like the idea, and Richard opposed it heartily. She must be taught English and educated, and made possible in "Christian clothing," as Mrs. Armour put it. Of the education they almost despaired—all save Richard; time, instruction, vanity, and a dressmaker might do much as to the other.

The evening of her arrival, Lali would not, with any urging, put on clothes of Marion's which had been sent in to her. And the next morning it was still the same.

She came into the breakfast-room dressed still in buckskin and moccasins, and though the grease had been taken out of her hair it was still combed flat. Mrs. Armour had tried to influence her through Mackenzie, but to no purpose. She was placidly stubborn.

It had been unwisely told her by Mackenzie that they were Marion's clothes. They scarcely took in the fact that the girl had pride, that she was the daughter of a chief, and a chieftainess herself, and that it was far from happy to offer her Marion's clothes to wear.

Now, Richard, when he was a lad, had been on a journey to the South Seas, and had learned some of the peculiarities of the native mind, and he did not sup-

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pose that American Indians differed very much from certain well-bred Polynesians in little matters of form and good taste. When his mother told him what had occurred before Lali entered the breakfast-room, he went directly to what he believed was the cause, and advised tact with conciliation. He also pointed out that Lali was something taller than Marion, and that she might be possessed of that general trait of humanity—vanity. Mrs. Armour had not yet got used to thinking of the girl in another manner than an intrusive being of a lower order, who was there to try their patience, but also to do their bidding. She had yet to grasp the fact that, being her son's wife, she must have, therefore, a position in the house, exercising a certain authority over the servants, who, to Mrs. Armour, at first seemed of superior stuff. But Richard said to her: "Mother, I fancy you don't quite grasp the position. The girl is the daughter of a chief, and the descendant of a family of chiefs, perhaps through many generations. In her own land she has been used to respect, and has been looked up to pretty generally. Her garments are, I fancy, considered very smart in the Hudson's Bay country; and a finely decorated blanket like hers is expensive up there. You see, we have to take the thing by comparison; so please give the girl a chance."

And Mrs. Armour answered wearily, "I suppose you are right, Richard; you generally are in the end, though why you should be I do not know, for you never see anything of the world any more, and you moon about among the cottagers. I suppose it's your native sense and the books you read."

Richard laughed softly, but there was a queer ring in the laugh, and he came over stumblingly and put

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his arm round his mother's shoulder. "Never mind how I get such sense as I have, mother; I have so much time to think, it would be a wonder if I hadn't some. But I think we had better try to study her, and coax her along, and not fob her off as a very inferior person, or we shall have our hands full in earnest. My opinion is, she has got that which will save her and us too—a very high spirit, which only needs opportunity to develop into a remarkable thing; and, take my word for it, mother, if we treat her as a chieftainess, or princess, or whatever she is, and not simply as a dusky person, we shall come off better and she will come off better in the long run. She is not darker than a Spaniard, anyhow."

At this point Marion entered the room, and her mother rehearsed briefly to her what their talk had been. Marion had had little sleep, and she only lifted her eyebrows at them at first. She was in little mood for conciliation. She remembered all at once that at supper the evening before her sister-in-law had said *How!* to the butler, and had eaten the mayonnaise with a dessert spoon. But presently, because she saw they waited for her to speak, she said, with a little flutter of maliciousness: "Wouldn't it be well for Richard—he has plenty of time, and we are also likely to have it now—to put us all through a course of instruction for the training of chieftainesses? And when do you think she will be ready for a drawing-room—Her Majesty Queen Victoria's, or ours?"

"Marion!" said Mrs. Armour severely; but Richard came round to her, and, with his fresh, child-like humour, put his arm round her waist and added: "Marion, I'd be willing to bet—if I were in the habit of betting—my shaky old pins here against a lock of your hair that you may present her at any drawing-room—

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ours or Queen Victoria's—in two years, if we go at it right; and it would serve Master Frank very well if we turned her out something, after all."

To which Mrs. Armour responded almost eagerly: "I wish it were only possible, Richard. And what you say is true, I suppose, that she is of rank in her own country, whatever value that may have."

Richard saw his advantage. "Well, mother," he said, "a chieftainess is a chieftainess, and I don't know but to announce her as such, and—"

"And be proud of it, as it were," put in Marion, "and pose her, and make her a prize—a Pocahontas, wasn't it?—and go on pretending world without end!" Marion's voice was still slightly grating, but there was in it too a faint sound of hope. "Perhaps," she said to herself, "Richard is right."

At this point the door opened and Lali entered, shown in by Colvin, her newly-appointed maid, and followed by Mackenzie, and, as we said, dressed still in her heathenish garments. She had a strong sense of dignity, for she stood still and waited. Perhaps nothing could have impressed Marion more. Had Lali been subservient simply, an entirely passive, unintelligent creature, she would probably have tyrannised over her in a soft, persistent fashion, and despised her generally. But Mrs. Armour and Marion saw that this stranger might become very troublesome indeed, if her temper were to have play. They were aware of capacities for passion in those dark eyes, so musing yet so active in expression, which moved swiftly from one object to another and then suddenly became resolute.

Both mother and daughter came forward, and held out their hands, wishing her a pleasant good-morning, and were followed by Richard, and immediately by

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General Armour, who had entered soon after her. She had been keen enough to read (if a little vaguely) behind the scenes, and her mind was wakening slowly to the peculiarity of the position she occupied. The place awed her, and had broken her rest by perplexing her mind, and she sat down to the breakfast-table with a strange hunted look in her face. But opposite to her was a window opening to the ground, and beyond it were the limes and beeches and a wide perfect sward and far away a little lake, on which swans and wild fowl fluttered. Presently, as she sat silent, eating little, her eyes lifted to the window. They flashed instantly, her face lighted up with a weird kind of charm, and suddenly she got to her feet with Indian exclamations on her lips, and, as if unconscious of them all, went swiftly to the window and out of it, waving her hands up and down once or twice to the trees and the sunlight.

"What did she say?" said Mrs. Armour, rising with the others.

"She said," replied Mackenzie, as she hurried towards the window, "that they were her beautiful woods, and there were wild birds flying and swimming in the water, as in her own country."

By this time all were at the window, Richard arriving last, and the Indian girl turned on them, her body all quivering with excitement, laughed a low, bird-like laugh, and then, clapping her hands above her head, she swung round and ran like a deer towards the lake, shaking her head back as an animal does when fleeing from his pursuers. She would scarcely have been recognised as the same placid, speechless woman in a blanket who sat with folded hands day after day on the *Aphrodite*.

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The watchers turned and looked at each other in wonder. Truly, their task of civilising a savage would not lack in interest. The old general was better pleased, however, at this display of activity and excitement than at yesterday's taciturnity. He loved spirit, even if it had to be subdued, and he thought on the instant that he might possibly come to look upon the fair savage as an actual and not a nominal daughter-in-law. He had a keen appreciation of courage, and he thought he saw in her face, as she turned upon them, a look of defiance or daring, and nothing could have got at his nature quicker. If the case had not been so near to his own hearthstone he would have chuckled. As it was, he said good-humouredly that Mackenzie and Marion should go and bring her back. But Mackenzie was already at that duty. Mrs. Armour had had the presence of mind to send for Colvin; but presently, when the general spoke, she thought it better that Marion should go, and counselled returning to breakfast and not making the matter of too much importance. This they did, Richard very reluctantly; while Marion, rather pleased than not at the spirit shown by the strange girl, ran away over the grass towards the lake, where Lali had now stopped. There was a little bridge at one point where the lake narrowed, and Lali, evidently seeing it all at once, went towards it, and ran up on it, standing poised above the water about the middle of it. For an instant an unpleasant possibility came into Marion's mind: suppose the excited girl intended suicide! She shivered as she thought of it, and yet—! She put that horribly cruel and selfish thought away from her with an indignant word at herself. She had passed Mackenzie, and came first to the lake. Here she slackened, and waved her hand

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playfully to the girl, so as not to frighten her; and then with a forced laugh came up panting on the bridge, and was presently by Lali's side. Lali eyed her a little furtively, but, seeing that Marion was much inclined to be pleasant, she nodded to her, said some Indian words hastily, and spread out her hands towards the water. As she did so, Marion noticed again the beauty of those hands and the graceful character of the gesture, so much so that she forgot the flat hair and the unstayed body, and the rather broad feet, and the delicate duskiness, which had so worked upon her in imagination and in fact the evening before. She put her hand kindly on that long slim hand stretched out beside her, and, because she knew not what else to speak, and because the tongue is very perverse at times,—saying the opposite of what is expected,—she herself blundered out, "*How! How!* Lali."

Perhaps Lali was as much surprised at the remark as Marion herself, and certainly very much more delighted. The sound of those familiar words, spoken by accident as they were, opened the way to a better understanding, as nothing else could possibly have done. Marion was annoyed with herself, and yet amused too. If her mind had been perfectly assured regarding Captain Vidall, it is probable that then and there a peculiar, a genial, comradeship would have been formed. As it was, Marion found this little event more endurable than she expected. She also found that Lali, when she laughed in pleasant acknowledgment of that *How!* had remarkably white and regular teeth. Indeed, Marion Armour began to discover some estimable points in the appearance of her savage sister-in-law. Marion remarked to herself that Lali might be a rather striking person, if she were dressed, as her mother said,

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in Christian garments, could speak the English language well—and was somebody else's sister-in-law.

At this point Mackenzie came breathlessly to the bridge, and called out a little sharply to Lali, rebuking her. In this Mackenzie made a mistake; for not only did Lali draw herself up with considerable dignity, but Marion, noticing the masterful nature of the tone, instantly said: "Mackenzie, you must remember that you are speaking to Mrs. Francis Armour, and that her position in General Armour's house is the same as mine. I hope it is not necessary to say anything more, Mackenzie."

Mackenzie flushed. She was a sensible woman, she knew that she had done wrong, and she said very promptly: "I am very sorry, miss. I was flustered, and I expect I haven't got used to speaking to—to Mrs. Armour as I'll be sure to do in the future."

As she spoke, two or three deer came trotting out of the beeches down to the lake side. If Lali was pleased and excited before, she was overwhelmed now. Her breath came in quick little gasps; she laughed; she tossed her hands; she seemed to become dizzy with delight; and presently, as if this new link with, and reminder of, her past, had moved her as one little expects a savage heart to be moved, two tears gathered in her eyes, then slid down her cheek unheeded, and dried there in the sunlight, as she still gazed at the deer. Marion, at first surprised, was now touched, as she could not have thought it possible concerning this wild creature, and her hand went out and caught Lali's gently. At this genuine act of sympathy, instinctively felt by Lali,—the stranger in a strange land, husbanded and yet a widow,—there came a flood of tears, and, dropping on her knees, she leaned against the low rail-

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ing of the bridge and wept silently. [illegible] her grief it seemed the more pathetic, and [illegible] dropped on her knees beside her, put her arm round her shoulder, and said: "Poor girl! Poor girl!"

At that Lali caught her hand, and held it, repeating after her the words: "Poor girl! Poor girl!"

She did not quite understand them, but she remembered that once just before she parted from her husband at the Great Lakes he had said those very words. If the fates had apparently given things into Frank Armour's hands when he sacrificed this girl to his revenge, they were evidently inclined to play a game which would eventually defeat his purpose, wicked as it had been in effect if not in absolute motive. What the end of this attempt to engraft the Indian girl upon the strictest convention of English social life would have been had her introduction not been at Greyhope, where faint likenesses to her past surrounded her, it is hard to conjecture. But, from present appearances, it would seem that Richard Armour was not wholly a false prophet; for the savage had shown herself that morning to possess, in their crudeness, some striking qualities of character. Given character, many things are possible, even to those who are not of the elect.

This was the beginning of better things. Lali seemed to the Armours not quite so impossible now. Had she been of the very common order of Indian "pure and simple," the task had resolved itself into making a common savage into a very common European. [illegible] whatever Lali was, it was abundantly evident that she must be reckoned with at all points, and that [illegible] more likely to become a very [illegible] Armour household than a [illegible] blushed for, whose eternal [illegible] her company.

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Years after that first morning Marion caught herself shuddering at the thought that came to her when she saw Lali hovering on the bridge. Whatever Marion's faults were, she had a fine dislike of anything that seemed unfair. She had not ridden to hounds for nothing. She had at heart the sportsman's instinct. It was upon this basis, indeed, that Richard appealed to her in the first trying days of Lali's life among them. To oppose your will to Marion on the basis of superior knowledge was only to turn her into a rebel; and a very effective rebel she made; for she had a pretty gift at the retort courteous, and she could take as much, and as well, as she gave. She rebelled at first at assisting in Lali's education, though by fits and starts she would teach her English words, and help her to form long sentences, and was, on the whole, quite patient. But Lali's real instructors were Mrs. Armour and Richard; her best, Richard.

The first few days she made but little progress, for everything was strange to her, and things made her giddy—the servants, the formal routine, the handsome furnishings, Marion's music, the great house, the many precise personal duties set for her, to be got through at stated times; and Mrs. Armour's rather grand manner. But there was the relief to this, else the girl had pined terribly for her native woods and prairies; this was the park, the deer, the lake, the hares, and birds. While she sat saying over after Mrs. Armour words and phrases in English, or was being shown how she must put on and wear the clothes which a dressmaker from Regent Street had been brought to make, her eyes would wander dreamily to the trees and the lake and the grass. They soon discovered that she would pay no attention and was straightway difficult to teach if she was not placed where she could

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look out on the park. They had no choice, for though her resistance was never active it was nevertheless effective.

Presently she got on very swiftly with Richard. For he, with instinct worthy of a woman, turned their lessons upon her own country and Frank. This cost him something, but it had its reward. There was no more listlessness. Previously Frank's name had scarcely been spoken to her. Mrs. Armour would have hours of hesitation and impotent regret before she brought herself to speak of her son to his Indian wife. Marion tried to do it a few times and failed; the general did it with rather a forced voice and manner, because he saw that his wife was very tender upon the point. But Richard, who never knew self-consciousness, spoke freely of Frank when he spoke at all; and it was seeing Lali's eyes brighten and her look earnestly fixed on him when he chanced to mention Frank's name, that determined him on his new method of instruction. It had its dangers, but he had calculated them all. The girl must be educated at all costs. The sooner that occurred the sooner would she see her own position and try to adapt herself to her responsibilities, and face the real state of her husband's attitude towards her.

He succeeded admirably. Striving to tell him about her past life, and ready to talk endlessly about her husband, of his prowess in the hunt, of his strength and beauty, she also strove to find English words for the purpose, and Richard supplied them with uncommon willingness. He humoured her so far as to learn many Indian words and phrases, but he was chary of his use of them, and tried hard to make her appreciative of her new life and surroundings. He watched her waking slowly to an understanding of the life, and of all

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that it involved. It gave him a kind of fear, too, because she was sensitive, and there was the possible danger of her growing disheartened or desperate, and doing some mad thing in the hour that she wakened to the secret behind her marriage.

His apprehensions were not without cause. For slowly there came into Lali's mind the element of comparison. She became conscious of it one day when some neighbouring people called at Greyhope. Mrs. Armour, in her sense of duty, which she had rigidly set before her, introduced Lali into the drawing-room. The visitors veiled their curiosity and said some pleasant casual things to the young wife, but she saw the half-curious, half-furtive glances, she caught a sidelong glance and smile, and when they were gone she took to looking at herself in a mirror, a thing she could scarcely be persuaded to do before. She saw the difference between her carriage and theirs, her manner of wearing her clothes and theirs, her complexion and theirs. She exaggerated the difference. She brooded on it. Now she sat downcast and timid, and hunted in face, as on the first evening she came; now she appeared restless and excited.

If Mrs. Armour was not exactly sympathetic with her, she was quiet and forbearing, and General Armour, like Richard, tried to draw her out—but not on the same subjects. He dwelt upon what she did; the walks she took in the park, those hours in the afternoon when, with Mackenzie or Colvin, she vanished into the beeches, making friends with the birds and deer and swans. But most of all she loved to go to the stables. She was, however, asked not to go unless Richard or General Armour was with her. She loved horses, and these were a wonder to her. She had neve[illegible]ny

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but the wild, ungroomed Indian pony, on which she had ridden in every fashion and over every kind of country. Mrs. Armour sent for a riding-master, and had riding-costumes made for her. It was intended that she should ride every day as soon as she seemed sufficiently presentable. This did not appear so very far off, for she improved daily in appearance. Her hair was growing finer, and was made up in the modest prevailing fashion; her skin, no longer exposed to an inclement climate, and subject to the utmost care, was smoother and fairer; her feet, encased in fine, well-made boots, looked much smaller; her waist was shaped to fashion, and she was very straight and lissom. So many things she did jarred on her relatives, that they were not fully aware of the great improvement in her appearance. Even Richard admitted her trying at times.

Marion went up to town to stay with Mrs. Townley, and there had to face a good deal of curiosity. People looked at her sometimes as if it was she and not Lali that was an Indian. But she carried things off bravely enough, and answered those kind inquiries, which one's friends make when we are in embarrassing situations, with answers so calm and pleasant that people did not know what to think.

"Yes," she said, in reply to Lady Balwood, "her sister-in-law might be in town later in the year, perhaps before the season was over: she could not tell. She was tired after her long voyage, and she preferred the quiet of Greyhope; she was fond of riding and country-life; but still she would come to town for a time." And so on.

"Ah, dear me, how charming! And doesn't she resent her husband's absence—during the honeymoon?

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or did the honeymoon occur before she came over to England?" And Lady Balwood tried to say it all playfully, and certainly said it something loudly. She had daughters.

But Marion was perfectly prepared. Her face did not change expression. "Yes, they had had their honeymoon on the prairies; Frank was so fascinated with the life and the people. He had not come home at once, because he was making she did not know how great a fortune over there in investments, and so Mrs. Armour came on before him, and, of course, as soon as he could get away from his business, he would follow his wife."

And though Marion smiled, her heart was very hot, and she could have slain Lady Balwood in her tracks. Lady Balwood then nodded a little patronisingly, and babbled that "she hoped so much to see Mrs. Francis Armour. She must be so very interesting, the papers said so much about her."

Now, while this conversation was going on, some one stood not far behind Marion, who seemed much interested in her and what she said. But Marion did not see this person. She was startled presently, however, to hear a strong voice say softly over her shoulder: "What a charming woman Lady Balwood is! And so ingenuous!"

She was grateful, tremulous, proud. Why had he—Captain Vidall—kept out of the way all these weeks, just when she needed him most, just when he should have played the part of a man? Then she was feeling twinges at the heart, too. She had seen Lady Agnes Martling that afternoon, and had noticed how the news had worn on her. She felt how much better it had been had Frank come quietly home and married her, instead

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of doing the wild, scandalous thing that was making so many heart-burnings. A few minutes ago she had longed for a chance to say something delicately acid to Lady Haldwell, once Julia Sherwood, who was there. Now there was a chance to give her bitter spirit tongue. She was glad—she dared not think how glad—to hear that voice again; but she was angry too, and he should suffer for it—the more so because she recognised in the tone, and afterwards in his face, that he was still absorbingly interested in her. There was a little burst of thanksgiving in her heart, and then she prepared a very notable commination service in her mind.

This meeting had been deftly arranged by Mrs. Townley, with the help of Edward Lambert, who now held her fingers with a kind of vanity of possession whenever he bade her good-bye or met her. Captain Vidall had, in fact, been out of the country, had only been back a week, and had only heard of Frank Armour's *mésalliance* from Lambert at an At Home forty-eight hours before. Mrs. Townley guessed what was really at the bottom of Marion's occasional bitterness, and, piecing together many little things dropped casually by her friend, had come to the conclusion that the happiness of two people was at stake.

When Marion shook hands with Captain Vidall she had herself exceedingly well under control. She looked at him in slight surprise, and casually remarked that they had not chanced to meet lately in the run of small-and-earlies. She appeared to be unconscious that he had been out of the country, and also that she had been till very recently indeed at Greyhope. He hastened to assure her that he had been away, and to lay siege to this unexpected barrier. He knew all about Frank's affair, and [illegible]

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it should make any difference in his regard for Frank's sister. Fastidious as he was in all things, he was fastidiously deferential. Not an exquisite, he had all that vanity as to appearance so usual with the military man; himself of the most perfect temper and sweetness of manner and conduct, the unusual disturbed him. Not possessed of a vivid imagination, he could scarcely conjure up this Indian bride at Greyhope.

But face to face with Marion Armour he saw what troubled his mind, and he determined he would not meet her irony with irony, her assumed indifference with indifference. He had learned one of the most important lessons of life—never to quarrel with a woman. Whoever has so far erred has been foolish indeed. It is the worst of policy, to say nothing of its being the worst of art; and life should never be without art. It is absurd to be perfectly natural; anything, anybody can be that. Well, Captain Hume Vidall was something of an artist, more, however, in principle than by temperament. He refused to recognise the rather malicious adroitness with which Marion turned his remarks again upon himself, twisted out of all semblance. He was very patient. He inquired quietly, and as if honestly interested, about Frank, and said—because he thought it safest as well as most reasonable—that, naturally, they must have been surprised at his marrying a native; but he himself had seen some such marriages turn out very well—in Japan, India, the South Sea Islands, and Canada. He assumed that Marion's sister-in-law was beautiful, and then disarmed Marion by saying that he thought of going down to Greyhope immediately, to call on General Armour and Mrs. Armour, and wondered if she was going back before the end of the season.

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Quick as Marion was, this was said so quietly she did not quite see the drift of it. She had inte staying in London to the end of the season, not bec she enjoyed it, but because she was determined to Frank's marriage at every quarter, and have it once for all, so far as herself was concerned. But taken slightly aback, she said, almost without th ing, that she would probably go back soon—she not quite sure; but certainly her father and mo would be glad to see Captain Vidall at any time.

Then, without any apparent relevancy, he asked if Mrs. Frank Armour still wore her Indian cost In any one else the question had seemed impertin in him it had a touch of confidence, of the privile close friendship. Then he said, with a meditative and a very calm, retrospective voice, that he was very much in love with a native girl in India, might have become permanently devoted to her, it not for the accident of his being ordered bac England summarily.

This was a piece of news which cut two ways. the first place it lessened the extraordinary char of Frank's marriage, and it roused in her an imme curiosity—which a woman always feels in the "affairs" of her lover, or possible lover. Vidall did take pains to impress her with the fact that the m occurred when he was almost a boy; and it was her earnest inquisition had drawn from him, bi bit, the circumstances of the case, and she had gotten many parts of her commination service an preserve an effective neutrality in tone, that she be aware he was speaking ancient history. Then it too late to draw back.

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into the conservatory, where they were quite alone, and there, with only a little pyramid of hydrangeas between them, which she could not help but notice chimed well with the colour of her dress, he dropped his voice a little lower, and then suddenly said, his eyes hard on her: "I want your permission to go to Greyhope."

The tone drew her eyes hastily to his, and, seeing, she dropped them again. Vidall had a strong will, and, what is of more consequence, a peculiarly attractive voice. It had a vibration which made some of his words organ-like in sound. She felt the influence of it. She said a little faintly, her fingers toying with a hydrangea: "I am afraid I do not understand. There is no reason why you should not go to Greyhope without my permission."

"I cannot go without it," he persisted. "I am waiting for my commission from you."

She dropped her hand from the flower with a little impatient motion. She was tired, her head ached, she wanted to be alone. "Why are you enigmatical?" she said. Then quickly: "I wish I knew what is in your mind. You play with words so."

She scarcely knew what she said. A woman who loves a man very much is not quick to take in the absolute declaration of that man's love on the instant; it is too wonderful for her. He felt his cheek flush with hers, he drew her look again to his. "Marion! Marion!" he said. That was all.

"Oh, hush, some one is coming!" was her quick, throbbing reply. When they parted a half-hour later, he said to her: "Will you give me my commission to go to Greyhope?"

"Oh no, I cannot," she said very gravely; "but come to Greyhope—when I go back."

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"And when will that be?" he said, smiling, yet a little ruefully too.

"Please ask Mrs. Townley," she replied; "she is coming also."

Marion knew what that commission to go to Greyhope meant. But she determined that he should see Lali first, before anything irrevocable was done. She still looked upon Frank's marriage as a scandal. Well, Captain Vidall should face it in all its crudeness. So, in a week or less, Marion and Mrs. Townley were in Greyhope.

Two months had gone since Lali arrived in England, and yet no letter had come to her, or to any of them, from Frank. Frank's solicitor in London had written him fully of her arrival, and he had had a reply, with further instructions regarding money to be placed to General Armour's credit for the benefit of his wife. Lali, as she became Europeanised, also awoke to the forms and ceremonies of her new life. She had overheard Frank's father and mother wondering, and fretting as they wondered, why they had not received any word from him. General Armour had even called him a scoundrel, which sent Frank's mother into tears. Then Lali had questioned Mackenzie and Colvin, for she had increasing shrewdness, and she began to feel her actual position. She resented General Armour's imputation, but in her heart she began to pine and wonder. At times, too, she was fitful, and was not to be drawn out. But she went on improving in personal appearance and manner and in learning the English language. Mrs. Townley's appearance marked a change in her. When they met she suddenly stood still and trembled. When Mrs. Townley came to her and took her hand and kissed her, she shivered, and then caught

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her about the shoulders lightly, but was silent. After a little she said: "Come—come to my wigwam, and talk with me."

She said it with a strange little smile, for now she recognised that the word *wigwam* was not to be used in her new life. But Mrs. Townley whispered: "Ask Marion to come too."

Lali hesitated, and then said, a little maliciously: "Marion, will you come to my wigwam?"

Marion ran to her, caught her about the waist, and replied gaily: "Yes, we will have a *pow-wow*—is that right—is *pow-wow* right?"

The Indian girl shook her head with a pretty vagueness, and vanished with them. General Armour walked up and down the room briskly, then turned on his wife and said: "Wife, it was a brutal thing: Frank doesn't deserve to be—the father of her child."

But Lali had moods—singular moods. She indulged in one three days after the arrival of Marion and Mrs. Townley. She had learned to ride with the side-saddle, and wore her riding-dress admirably. Nowhere did she show to better advantage. She had taken to riding now with General Armour on the country roads. On this day Captain Vidall was expected, he having written to ask that he might come. What trouble Lali had with one of the servants that morning was never thoroughly explained, but certain it is, she came to have a crude notion of why Frank Armour married her. The servant was dismissed duly, but that was after the *contre-temps*.

It was late afternoon. Everybody had been busy, because one or two other guests were expected besides Captain Vidall. Lali had kept to herself, sending word through Richard that she would not "be English," as she vaguely put it, that day. She had sent Mackenzie

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on some mission. She sat on the floor of her room, as she used to sit on the ground in her father's lodge. Her head was bowed in her hands, and her arms rested on her knees. Her body swayed to and fro. Presently all motion ceased. She became perfectly still. She looked before her as if studying something.

Her eyes immediately flashed. She rose quickly to her feet, went to her wardrobe, and took out her Indian costume and blanket, with which she could never be induced to part. Almost feverishly she took off the clothes she wore and hastily threw them from her. Then she put on the buckskin clothes in which she had journeyed to England, drew down her hair as she used to wear it, fastened round her waist a long red sash which had been given her by a governor of the Hudson's Bay Company when he had visited her father's country, threw her blanket round her shoulders, and then eyed herself in the great mirror in the room. What she saw evidently did not please her perfectly, for she stretched out her hands and looked at them; she shook her head at herself and put her hand to her cheeks and pinched them,—they were not so brown as they once were,—then she thrust out her foot. She drew it back quickly in disdain. Immediately she caught the fashionable slippers from her feet and threw them among the discarded garments. She looked at herself again. Still she was not satisfied, but she threw up her arms, as with a sense of pleasure and freedom, and laughed at herself. She pushed out her moccasined foot, tapped the floor with it, nodded towards it, and said a word or two in her own language. She heard some one in the next room, possibly Mackenzie. She stepped to the door leading into the hall, opened it, went out, travelled its length, ran down a back hallway, out into the park,

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towards the stables, her blanket, as her hair, flying behind her.

She entered the stables, made for a horse that she had ridden much, put a bridle on him, led him out before any one had seen her, and, catching him by the mane, suddenly threw herself on him at a bound, and, giving him a tap with a short whip she had caught up in the stable, headed him for the main avenue and the open road. Then a stableman saw her and ran after, but he might as well have tried to follow the wind. He forthwith proceeded to saddle another horse. Boulter also saw her as she passed the house, and, running in, told Mrs. Armour and the general. They both ran to the window and saw dashing down the avenue—a picture out of Fenimore Cooper; a saddleless horse with a rider whose fingers merely touched the bridle, riding as on a journey of life and death.

"My God, it's Lali! She's mad—she's mad! She is striking that horse! It will bolt! It will kill her!" cried the general.

Then he rushed for a horse to follow her. Mrs. Armour's hands clasped painfully. For an instant she had almost the same thought as had Marion on the first morning of Lali's coming; but that passed, and left her gazing helplessly after the horse-woman. The flying blanket had frightened the blooded horse, and he made desperate efforts to fulfil the general's predictions.

Lali soon found that she had miscalculated. She was not riding an Indian pony, but a crazed, high-strung horse. As they flew, she sitting superbly and tugging at the bridle, the party coming from the railway station entered the great gate, accompanied by Richard and Marion. In a moment they sighted this wild pair bearing down upon them with a terrible swiftness.

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As Marion recognised Lali she turned pale and cried out, rising in her seat. Instinctively Captain Vidall knew who it was, though he could not guess the cause of the singular circumstance. He saw that the horse had bolted, but also that the rider seemed entirely fearless. "Why, in Heaven's name," he said between his teeth, "doesn't she let go that blanket!"

At that moment Lali did let it go, and the horse dashed by them, making hard for the gate. "Turn the horses round and follow her," said Vidall to the driver. While this was doing, Marion caught sight of her father riding hard down the avenue. He passed them, and called to them to hurry on after him.

Lali had not the slightest sense of fear, but she knew that the horse had gone mad. When they passed through the gate and swerved into the road, a less practised rider would have been thrown. She sat like wax. The pace was incredible for a mile, and though General Armour rode well, he was far behind.

Suddenly a trap appeared in the road in front of them, and the driver, seeing the runaway, set his horses at right angles to the road. It served the purpose only to provide another danger. Not far from where the trap was drawn, and between it and the runaway, was a lane, which ended at a farmyard in a *cul-de-sac*. The horse swerved into it, not slacking its pace, and in the fraction of a minute came to the farmyard.

But now the fever was in Lali's blood. She did not care whether she lived or died. A high hedge formed the *cul-de-sac*. When she saw the horse slacking she cut it savagely across the head twice with a whip, and drove him at the green wall. He was of too good make to refuse it, stiff as it was. He rose to it magnificently, and cleared it; but almost as he struck the ground

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squarely, he staggered and fell—the girl beneath him. He had burst a blood-vessel. The ground was soft and wet; the weight of the horse prevented her from getting free. She felt its hoof striking in its death-struggles, and once her shoulder was struck. Instinctively she buried her face in the mud, and her arms covered her head.

And then she knew no more.

When she came to, she was in the carriage within the gates of Greyhope, and Marion was bending over her. She suddenly tried to lift herself, but could not. Presently she saw another face—that of General Armour. It was stern, and yet his eyes were swimming as he looked at her.

"*How!*" she said to him—"*How!*" and fainted again.

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CHAPTER VI

THE PASSING OF THE YEARS

LALI's recovery was not rapid. A change had come upon her. With that strange ride had gone the last strong flicker of the desire for savage life in her. She knew now the position she held towards her husband: that he had never loved her; that she was only an instrument for unworthy retaliation. So soon as she could speak after her accident, she told them that they must not write to him and tell him of it. She also made them promise that they would give him no news of her at all, save that she was well. They could not refuse to promise; they felt she had the right to demand much more than that. They had begun to care for her for herself, and when the months went by, and one day there was a hush about her room, and anxiety, and then relief, in the faces of all, they came to care for her still more for the sake of her child.

As the weeks passed, the fair-haired child grew more and more like his father; but if Lali thought of her husband they never knew it by anything she said, for she would not speak of him. She also made them promise that they would not write to him of the child's birth. Richard, with his sense of justice, and knowing how much the woman had been wronged, said that in all this she had done quite right; that Frank, if he had done his duty after marrying her, should have come with her. And because they all felt that Richard had been her best friend as well as their own, they called the child after

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him. This also was Lali's wish. Coincident with her motherhood there came to Lali a new purpose. She had not lived with the Armours without absorbing some of their fine social sense and dignity. This, added to the native instinct of pride in her, gave her a new ambition. As hour by hour her child grew dear to her, so hour by hour her husband grew away from her. She schooled herself against him. At times she thought she hated him. She felt she could never forgive him, but she would prove to him that it was she who had made the mistake of her life in marrying him; that she had been wronged, not he; and that his sin would face him with reproach and punishment one day. Richard's prophecy was likely to come true: she would defeat very perfectly indeed Frank's intentions. After the child was born, so soon as she was able, she renewed her studies with Richard and Mrs. Armour. She read every morning for hours; she rode; she practised all those graceful arts of the toilet which belong to the social convention; she showed an unexpected faculty for singing, and practised it faithfully; and she begged Mrs. Armour and Marion to correct her at every point where correction seemed necessary. When the child was two years old, they all went to London, something against Lali's personal feelings, but quite in accord with what she felt her duty.

Richard was left behind at Greyhope. For the first time in eighteen months he was alone with his old quiet duties and recreations. During that time he had not neglected his pensioners,—his poor, sick, halt, and blind,—but a deeper, larger interest had come into his life in the person of Lali. During all that time she had seldom been out of his sight, never out of his influence and tutelage. His days had been full, his every hour

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had been given a keen, responsible interest. As if by tacit consent, every incident or development of Lali's life was influenced by his judgment and decision. He had been more to her than General Armour, Mrs. Armour, or Marion. Schooled as he was in all the ways of the world, he had at the same time a mind as sensitive as a woman's, an indescribable gentleness, a persuasive temperament. Since, years before, he had withdrawn from the social world and become a recluse, many of his finer qualities had gone into an indulgent seclusion. He had once loved the world and the gay life of London, but some untoward event, coupled with a radical love of retirement, had sent him into years of isolation at Greyhope.

His tutelar relations with Lali had reopened many an old spring of sensation and experience. Her shy dependency, her innocent inquisitiveness, had searched out his remotest sympathies. In teaching her he had himself been re-taught. Before she came he had been satisfied with the quiet usefulness and studious ease of his life. But in her presence something of his old youthfulness came back, some reflection of the ardent hopes of his young manhood. He did not notice the change in himself. He only knew that his life was very full. He read later at nights, he rose earlier in the morning. But unconsciously to himself, he was undergoing a change. The more a man's sympathies and emotions are active, the less is he the philosopher. It is only when one has withdrawn from the more personal influence of the emotions that one's philosophy may be trusted. One may be interested in mankind and still be philosophical—may be, as it were, the priest and confessor to all comers. But let one be touched in some vital corner in one's nature, and the high, faultless impartiality is gone. In

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proportion as Richard's interest in Lali had grown, the universal quality of his sympathy had declined. Man is only man. Not that his benefactions as lord-bountiful in the parish had grown perfunctory, but the calm detail of his interest was not so definite. He was the same, yet not the same.

He was not aware of any difference in himself. He did not know that he looked younger by ten years. Such is the effect of mere personal sympathy upon a man's look and bearing. When, therefore, one bright May morning, the family at Greyhope, himself excluded, was ready to start for London, he had no thought but that he would drop back into his old silent life, as it was before Lali came, and his brother's child was born. He was not conscious that he was very restless that morning; he scarcely was aware that he had got up two hours earlier than usual. At the breakfast-table he was cheerful and alert. After breakfast he amused himself in playing with the child till the carriage was brought round. It was such a morning as does not come a dozen times a year in England. The sweet, moist air blew from the meadows and up through the lime trees with a warm, insinuating gladness. The lawn sloped delightfully away to the flowered embrasures of the park, and a fragrant abundance of flowers met the eye and cheered the senses. While Richard loitered on the steps with the child and its nurse, more excited than he knew, Lali came out and stood beside him. At the moment Richard was looking into the distance. He did not hear her when she came. She stood near him for a moment, and did not speak. Her eyes followed the direction of his look, and idled tenderly with the prospect before her. She did not even notice the child. The same thought was in the mind of h

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difference. Richard was wondering how any one could choose to change the sweet dignity of that rural life for the flaring, hurried delights of London and the season. He had thought this a thousand times, and yet, though he would have been little willing to acknowledge it, his conviction was not so impregnable as it had been.

Mrs. Francis Armour was stepping from the known to the unknown. She was leaving the precincts of a life in which, socially, she had been born again. Its sweetness and benign quietness had all worked upon her nature and origin to change her. In that it was an out-door life, full of freshness and open-air vigour, it was not antagonistic to her past. Upon this sympathetic basis had been imposed the conditions of a fine social decorum. The conditions must still exist. But how would it be when she was withdrawn from this peaceful activity of nature and set down among "those garish lights" in Cavendish Square and Piccadilly? She hardly knew to what she was going as yet. There had been a few social functions at Greyhope since she had come, but that could give her, after all, but little idea of the swing and pressure of London life.

At this moment she was lingering over the scene before her. She was wondering with the naïve wonder of an awakened mind. She had intended many times of late saying to Richard all the native gratitude she felt; yet somehow she had never been able to say it. The moment of parting had come.

"What are you thinking of, Richard?" she said now. He started and turned towards her.

"I hardly know," he answered. "My thoughts were drifting."

"Richard," she said abruptly, "I want to thank you."

"Thank me for what, Lali?" he questioned.

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"To thank you, Richard, for everything—since I came, over three years ago."

He broke out into a soft little laugh, then, with his old good-natured manner, caught her hand as he did the first night she came to Greyhope, patted it in a fatherly fashion, and said:

"It is the wrong way about, Lali; I ought to be thanking you, not you me. Why, look what a stupid old fogy I was then, toddling about the place with too much time on my hands, reading a lot and forgetting everything; and here you came in, gave me something to do, made the little I know of any use, and ran a pretty gold wire down the rusty fiddle of life. If there are any speeches of gratitude to be made, they are mine, they are mine."

"Richard," she said very quietly and gravely, "I owe you more than I can ever say—in English. You have taught me to speak in your tongue enough for all the usual things of life, but one can only speak from the depths of one's heart in one's native tongue. And see," she added, with a painful little smile, "how strange it would sound if I were to tell you all I thought in the language of my people—of my people, whom I shall never see again. Richard, can you understand what it must be to have a father whom one is never likely to see again—whom, if one did see again, something painful would happen? We grow away from people against our will; we feel the same towards them, but they cannot feel the same towards us; for their world is in another hemisphere. We want to love them, and we love, remember, and are glad to meet them again, but they feel that we are unfamiliar, and, because we have grown different outwardly, they seem to miss some chord that used to ring. Richard, I—I—" She paused.

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"Yes, Lali," he [illegible]
far, but speak out.

"I am not happy [illegible]
happy. I have my ch[illegible]
cannot go back to the life [illegible]
go on as I am, a stranger [illegible]
pitied, suffered, cared for a [illegible]

The nurse had drawn [illegible]
the child. The rest of the [illegible]
preparations inside the house. [illegible]
to watch the singular little [illegible]

"You should not say that," he added, [illegible]
you to be one of us."

"But all your world does not feel me [illegible]
them," she replied.

"We shall see about that when you go [illegible]
You are [illegible] morbid, Lali. I don't wonder at your
feeling [illegible] but then you will simply [illegible]
things before you—now you take my word for it. [illegible]
I know London pretty well."

She held out her ungloved hands.

"Do they compare with the white hands of the ladies
you know?" she said.

"They are about the finest hands I have ever
seen," he replied. "You can't see yourself, sister of
mine."

"I do not care very much to see myself," she said.
"If I had not a maid I expect I should look very shift-
less, for I don't care to look in a mirror. My only mir-
ror used to be a stream of water in summer," she [illegible]
"and a corner of a looking-glass got from the [illegible]
Bay fort in the winter."

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She reached out and touched his arm.

"Do you like to look at me?" she questioned, with a strange simple candour.

For the first time in many a year, Richard Armour blushed like a girl fresh from school. The question had come so suddenly, it had gone so quickly into a sensitive corner of his nature, that he lost command of himself for the instant, yet had little idea why the command was lost. He touched the fingers on his arm affectionately.

"Like to look at you—like to look at you? Why, of course we all like to look at you. You are very fine and handsome—and interesting."

"Richard," she said, drawing her hands away, "is that why you like to look at me?"

He had recovered himself. He laughed in his old hearty way, and said:

"Yes, yes; why, of course! Come, let us go and see the boy," he added, taking her arm and hurrying her down the steps. "Come and let us see Richard Joseph, the pride of all the Armours."

She moved beside him in a kind of dream. She had learned much since she came to Greyhope, and yet she could not at that moment have told exactly why she asked Richard the question that had confused him, nor did she know quite what lay behind the question. But every problem which has life works itself out to its appointed end, if fumbling human fingers do not meddle with it. Half the miseries of this world are caused by forcing issues, in every problem of the affections, the emotions, and the soul. There is a law working with which there should be no tampering, lest in foolish interruption come only confusion and disaster. Against every such question there should be written the one word, "Wait."

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Richard Armour stooped over the child. "A beauty," he said, "a perfect little gentleman. Like Richard Joseph Armour there is none," he added.

"Whom do you think he looks like, Richard?" she asked. This was a question she had never asked before since the child was born. Whom the child looked like every one knew; but within the past year and a half Francis Armour's name had seldom been mentioned, and never in connection with the child. The child's mother asked the question with a strange quietness. Richard answered it without hesitation.

"The child looks like Frank," he said. "As like him as can be."

"I am glad," she said, "for all your sakes."

"You are very deep this morning, Lali," Richard said, with a kind of helplessness. "Frank will be pretty proud of the youngster when he comes back. But he won't be prouder of him than I am."

"I know that," she said. "Won't you be lonely without the boy—and me, Richard?"

Again the question went home. "Lonely? I should think I would," he said. "I should think I would. But then, you see, school is over, and the master stays behind and makes up the marks. You will find London a jollier master than I am, Lali. There'll be lots of shows, and plenty to do, and smart frocks, and no end of feeds and frolics; and that is more amusing than studying three hours a day with a dry old stick like me. I tell you what, when Frank comes—"

She interrupted him. "Do not speak of that," she said. Then, with a sudden burst of feeling, though her words were scarcely audible: "I owe you everything, Richard—everything that is good. I owe him nothing, Richard—nothing but what is bitter."

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Nobody thought much of leaving Richard behind at Greyhope. It seemed the natural thing to do. But still he had not been left alone—entirely alone—for three years or more.

The days and weeks went on. If Richard had been accounted eccentric before, there was far greater cause for the term now. Life dragged. Too much had been taken out of his life all at once; for, in the first place, the family had been drawn together more during the trouble which Lali's advent had brought; then the child and its mother, his pupil, were gone also. He wandered about in a kind of vague unrest. The hardest thing in this world to get used to is the absence of a familiar footstep and the cheerful greeting of a familiar eye. And the man with no chick or child feels even the absence of his dog from the hearth-rug when he returns from a journey or his day's work. It gives him a sense of strangeness and loss. But when it is the voice of a woman and the hand of a child that is missed, you can back no speculation upon that man's mood or mind or conduct. There is no influence like the influence of habit, and that is how, when the minds of people are at one, physical distances and differences, no matter how great, are invisible, or at least not obvious.

Richard Armour was a sensible man; but when one morning he suddenly packed a portmanteau and went up to town to Cavendish Square, the act might be considered from two sides of the equation. If he came back to enter again into the social life which, for so many years, he had abjured, it was not very sensible, because the world never welcomes its deserters; it might, if men and women grew younger instead of older. If he came to see his family, or because he hungered for his godchild, or because—but we are hur-

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rying the situation. It were wiser not to state the problem yet. The afternoon that he arrived at Cavendish Square all his family were out except his brother's wife. Lali was in the drawing-room, receiving a visitor who had asked for Mrs. Armour and Mrs. Francis Armour. The visitor was received by Mrs. Francis Armour. The visitor knew that Mrs. Armour was not at home. She had by chance seen her and Marion in Bond Street, and was not seen by them. She straightway got into her carriage and drove up to Cavendish Square, hoping to find Mrs. Francis Armour at home. There had been house-parties at Greyhope since Lali had come there to live, but this visitor, though once an intimate friend of the family, had never been a guest.

The visitor was Lady Haldwell, once Miss Julia Sherwood, who had made possible what was called Francis Armour's tragedy. Since Lali had come to town Lady Haldwell had seen her, but had never met her. She was not at heart wicked, but there are few women who can resist an opportunity of anatomising and reckoning up the merits and demerits of a woman who has married an old lover. When that woman is in the position of Lali, the situation has an unusual piquancy and interest. Hence Lady Haldwell's journey of inquisition to Cavendish Square.

As Richard passed the drawing-room door to ascend the stairs, he recognised the voices.

Once a sort of heathen, as Mrs. Francis Armour had been, she still could grasp the situation with considerable clearness. There is nothing keener than one woman's instinct regarding another woman, where a man is concerned. Mrs. Francis Armour received Lady Haldwell with a quiet stateliness, which, if it did not astonish her, gave her sufficient warning that matters

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Presently Lady Haldwell said, as Lali gave
"I am Lady Haldwell. As Miss Sherwood
old friend of your husband."

A scornful glitter came into Mrs. Armour'
peculiar touch of burnished gold, an effect of t
a certain angle of the lens. It gave for the i
uncanny look to the face, almost something
She guessed why this woman had come. She
whole history of the past, and it touched her in
spot. She knew she was had at an advantage
her was a woman perfectly trained in the fi
life to which she was born, whose equanimity
regular as her features. Herself was by nature
ture of impulse, of the woods and streams a
life. The social convention had been engraft
yet she was used to thinking and speaking
candour. She was to have her training in the
of superficiality, but that was to come; and
came she would not be an unskilful apprentice.
haps the latent subtlety of her race came to he
natural candour at the moment. For she said at
in a slow, quiet tone:

"I never heard my husband speak of you. Will
sit down?"

"And Mrs. Armour and Marion are not in? N
suppose your husband did not speak much of his
friends."

The attack was studied and cruel. But Lady H
well had been stung by Mrs. Armour's remark, a
piqued her that this was possible.

"Well, yes, he spoke of some of his friends, but
of you."

"Indeed! That is strange."

"There was no necessity," said Mrs. Armour qui

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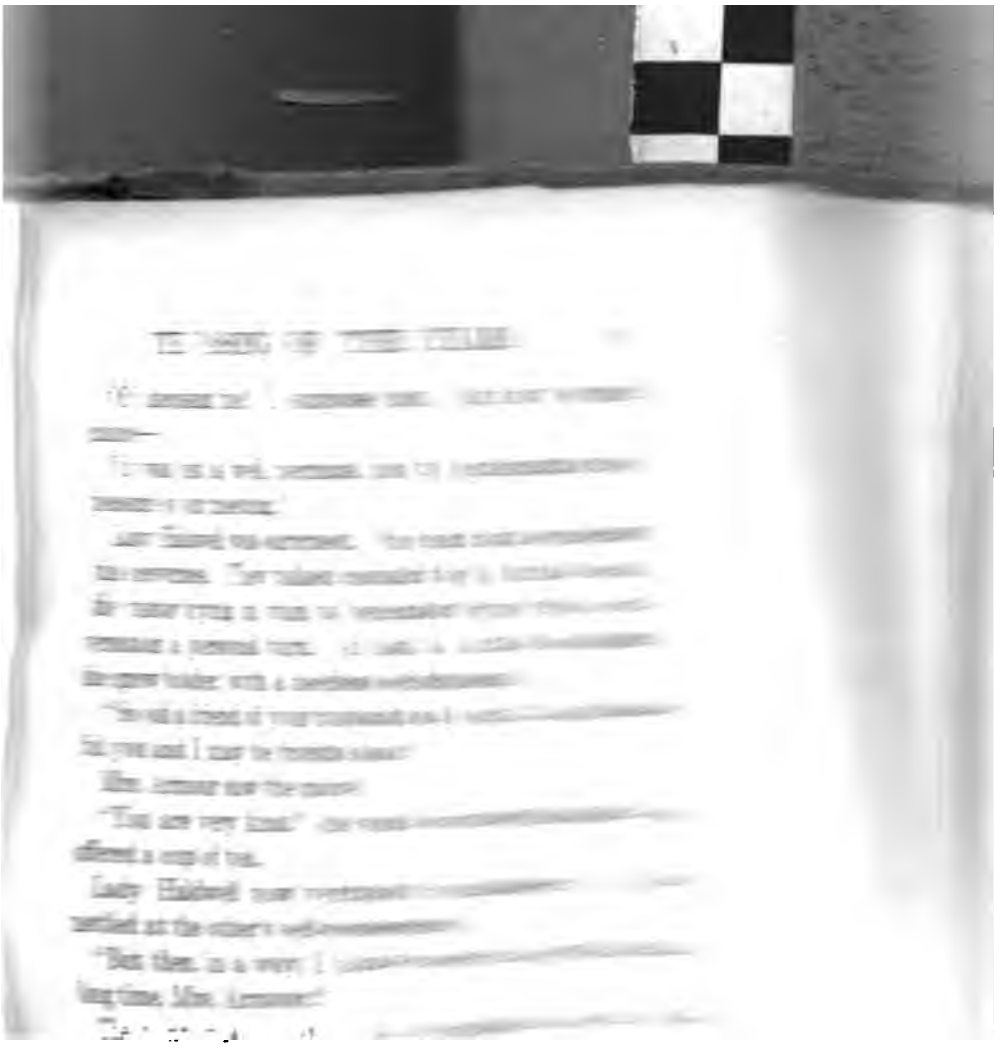

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"In my country enemies do not compel us to be polite."

"By calling on you?" Lady Haldwell was growing a little reckless. "But then, that is a savage country. We are different here. I suppose, however, your husband told you of these things, so that you were not surprised. And when does he come? His stay is protracted. Let me see, how long is it? Ah yes, near four years." Here she became altogether reckless, which she regretted afterwards, for she knew, after all, what was due herself. "He *will* come back, I suppose?"

Lady Haldwell was no coward, else she had hesitated before speaking in that way before this woman, in whose blood was the wildness of the heroical North. Perhaps she guessed the passion in Lali's breast, perhaps not. In any case she would have said what she listed at the moment.

Wild as were the passions in Lali's breast, she thought on the instant of her child, of what Richard Armour would say; for he had often talked to her about not showing her emotions and passions, had told her that violence of all kinds was not wise or proper. Her fingers ached to grasp this beautiful, exasperating woman by the throat. But after an effort at calmness she remained still and silent, looking at her visitor with a scornful dignity. Lady Haldwell presently rose,—she could not endure the furnace of that look,—and said good-bye. She turned towards the door. Mrs. Armour remained immovable. At that instant, however, some one stepped from behind a large screen just inside the door. It was Richard Armour. He was pale, and on his face was a sternness the like of which this and perhaps only one other woman had ever seen on him. He interrupted her.

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"Lady Haldwell has a fine talent for irony," he said, "but she does not always use it wisely. In a man it would bear another name, and from a man it would be differently received." He came close to her. "You are a brave woman," he said, "or you would have been more careful. Of course you knew that my mother and sister were not at home?"

She smiled languidly. "And why 'of course'?"

"I do not know that; only I know that I think so; and I also think that my brother Frank's worst misfortune did not occur when Miss Julia Sherwood trafficked without compunction in his happiness."

"Don't be oracular, my dear Richard Armour," she replied. "You are trying, really. This seems almost melodramatic; and melodrama is bad enough at Drury Lane."

"You are not a good friend even to yourself," he answered.

"What a discoverer you are! And how much in earnest! Do come back to the world, Mr. Armour; you would be a relief, a new sensation."

"I fancy I shall come back, if only to see the 'engineer hoist with his own'—torpedo."

He paused before the last word to give it point, for her husband's father had made his money out of torpedoes. She felt the sting in spite of herself, and she saw the point.

"And then we will talk it over at the end of the season," he added, "and compare notes. Good-afternoon."

"You stake much on your hazard," she said, glancing back at Lali, who still stood immovable. "Au revoir!"

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As he did so, she ran forward to him with a cry. "Oh, Richard, Richard!" she exclaimed, with a sob, threw her arms over his shoulder, and let her forehead drop on his breast. Then came a sudden impulse in his blood. Long after he shuddered when he remembered what he thought at that instant; what he wished to do; what rich madness possessed him. He knew now why he had come to town; he also knew why he must not stay, or, if staying, what must be his course.

He took her gently by the arm and led her to a chair, speaking cheerily to her. Then he sat down beside her, and all at once again, her face wet and burning, she flung herself forward on her knees beside him, and clung to him.

"Oh, Richard, I am glad you have come," she said. "I would have killed her if I had not thought of you. I want you to stay; I am always better when you are with me. I have missed you, and I know that baby misses you too."

He had his cue. He rose, trembling a little. "Come, come," he said heartily, "it's all right, it's all right—my sister. Let us go and see the youngster. There, dry your eyes, and forget all about that woman. She is only envious of you. Come, for his imperial highness!"

She was in a tumult of feeling. It was seldom that she had shown emotion in the past two years, and it was the more ample when it did break forth. But she dried her eyes, and together they went to the nursery. She dismissed the nurse and they were left alone by the sleeping child. She knelt at the head of the little cot, and touched the child's forehead with her lips. He stooped down also beside it.

"He's a grand little fellow," he said. "Lali," he continued presently, "it is time Frank came home. I

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am going to write for him. If he does not come at once, I shall go and fetch him."

"Never! never!" Her eyes flashed angrily. "Promise that you will not. Let him come when he is ready. He does not care." She shuddered a little.

"But he will care when he comes, and you—you care for him, Lali?"

Again she shuddered, and a whiteness ran under the hot excitement of her cheeks. She said nothing, but looked up at him, then dropped her face in her hands.

"You do care for him, Lali," he said earnestly, almost solemnly, his lips twitching slightly. "You must care for him; it is his right; and he will—I swear to you I know he will—care for you."

In his own mind there was another thought, a hard, strange thought; and it had to do with the possibility of his brother not caring for this wife.

Still she did not speak.

"To a good woman, with a good husband," he continued, "there is no one—there should be no one—like the father of her child. And no woman ever loved her child more than you do yours." He knew that this was special pleading.

She trembled, and then dropped her cheek beside the child's. "I want Frank to be happy," he went on; "there is no one I care more for than for Frank."

She lifted her face to him now, in it a strange light. Then her look ran to confusion, and she seemed to read all that he meant to convey. He knew she did. He touched her shoulder.

"You must do the best you can every way, for Frank's sake, for all our sakes. I will help you—God knows I will—all I can."

"Ah, yes, yes," she whispered, from the child's pillow.

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He could see the flame in her cheek. "I understand." She put out her hand to him, but did not look up. "Leave me alone with my baby, Richard," she pleaded.

He took her hand and pressed it again and again in his old, unconscious way. Then he let it go, and went slowly to the door. There he turned and looked back at her. He mastered the hot thought in him.

"God help me!" she murmured from the cot.

The next morning Richard went back to Greyhope.

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CHAPTER VII

A COURT-MARTIAL

It was hard to tell, save for a certain deliberateness of speech and a colour a little more pronounced than that of a Spanish woman, that Mrs. Frank Armour had not been brought up in England. She had a kind of grave sweetness and distant charm which made her notable at any table or in any ballroom. Indeed, it soon became apparent that she was to be the pleasant talk, the interest of the season. This was tolerably comforting to the Armours. Again Richard's prophecy had been fulfilled, and as he sat alone at Greyhope and read the *Morning Post*, noticing Lali's name at distinguished gatherings, or, picking up the *World*, saw how the lion-hunters talked extravagantly of her, he took some satisfaction to himself that he had foreseen her triumph where others looked for her downfall. Lali herself was not elated; it gratified her, but she had been an angel, and a very unsatisfactory one, if it had not done so. As her confidence grew (though outwardly she had never appeared to lack it greatly), she did not hesitate to speak of herself as an Indian, her country as a good country, and her people as a noble if dispossessed race; all the more so if she thought reference to her nationality and past was being rather conspicuously avoided. She had asked General Armour for an interview with her husband's solicitor. This was granted. When she met the solicitor, she asked him to send no newspaper

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to her husband containing any reference to herself, nor yet to mention her in his letters.

She had never directly received a line from him but once, and that was after she had come to know the truth about his marriage with her. She could read in the conventional sentences, made simple as for a child, the strained politeness, and his absolute silence as to whether or not a child had been born to them, the utter absence of affection for her. She had also induced General Armour and his wife to give her husband's solicitor no information regarding the birth of the child. There was thus apparently no more inducement for him to hurry back to England than there was when he had sent her off on his mission of retaliation, which had been such an ignominious failure. For the humiliation of his family had been short-lived, the affront to Lady Haldwell nothing at all. The Armours had not been human if they had failed to enjoy their daughter-in-law's success. Although they never, perhaps, would quite recover the disappointment concerning Lady Agnes Martling, the result was so much better than they in their cheerfulest moments dared hope for, that they appeared genuinely content.

To their grandchild they were devotedly attached. Marion was his faithful slave and admirer, so much so that Captain Vidall, who now and then was permitted to see the child, declared himself jealous. He and Marion were to be married soon. The wedding had been delayed owing to his enforced absence abroad. Mrs. Edward Lambert, once Mrs. Townley, shyly regretted in Lali's presence that the child, or one as sweet, was not hers. Her husband evidently shared her opinion, from the extraordinary notice he took of it when his wife was not present. Not that Richard Joseph Ar-

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their children? It was strange he had not thought of that before. Children? He shrugged his shoulders. There might possibly be a child, but children—never! But he doubted even regarding a child, for no word had come to him concerning that possibility. He was even most puzzled at the tone and substance of their letters. From the beginning there had been no reproaches, no excitement, no railing, but studied kindness and conventional statements, through which Mrs. Armour's solicitous affection scarcely ever peeped. He had shot his bolt, and got—consideration, almost imperturbability. They appeared to treat the matter as though he were a wild youth who would not yet mend his ways. He read over their infrequent letters to him; his to them had been still more infrequent. In one there was the statement that "she was progressing favourably with her English"; in another, that "she was riding a good deal"; again, that "she appeared anxious to adapt herself to her new life."

At all these he whistled a little to himself, and smiled bitterly. Then, all at once, he got up and straightway burned them all. He again tried to put the matter behind him for the present, knowing that he must face it one day, and staving off its reality as long as possible. He did his utmost to be philosophical and say his *quid refert*, but it was easier tried than done; for Jacques Pontiac's words kept rankling in his mind, and he found himself carrying round a vague load, which made him abstracted occasionally, and often a little reckless in action and speech. In hunting bear and moose he had proved himself more daring than the oldest hunter, and proportionately successful. He paid his servants well, but was sharp with them.

He made long, hard expeditions, d

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as the hardiest of prairie and mountain men mostly hesitate to defy it; he bought up much land, then, dissatisfied, sold it again at a loss, but subsequently made final arrangements for establishing a very large farm. When he once became actually interested in this he shook off something of his moodiness and settled himself to develop the thing. He had good talent for initiative and administration, and at last, in the time when his wife was a feature of the London season, he found his scheme in working order, and the necessity of going to England was forced upon him.

Actually he wished that the absolute necessity had presented itself before. There was always the moral necessity, of course—but then! Here now was a business need; and he must go. Yet he did not fix a day or make definite arrangements. He could hardly have believed himself such a coward. With liberal emphasis he called himself a sneak, and one day at Fort Charles sat down to write to his solicitor in Montreal to say that he would come on at once. Still he hesitated. As he sat there thinking, Eye-of-the-Moon, his father-in-law, opened the door quietly and entered. He had avoided the chief ever since he had come back to Fort Charles, and practically had not spoken to him for a year. Armour flushed slightly with annoyance. But presently, with a touch of his old humour, he rose, held out his hand, and said ironically: "Well, father-in-law, it's about time we had a big talk, isn't it? We're not very intimate for such close relatives."

The old Indian did not fully understand the meaning or the tone of Armour's speech, but he said "*How!*" and, reaching out his hand for the pipe offered him, lighted it, and sat down, smoking in silence. Armour waited; but, seeing that the other was not yet moved

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to talk, he turned to his letter again. After a time, Eye-of-the-Moon said gravely, getting to his feet: "Brother!"

Armour looked up, then rose also. The Indian bowed to him courteously, then sat down again. Armour threw a leg over a corner of the table and waited.

"Brother," said the Indian presently, "you are of the great race that conquers us. You come and take our land and our game, and we at last have to beg of you for food and shelter. Then you take our daughters, and we know not where they go. They are gone like the down from the thistle. We see them not, but you remain. And men say evil things. There are bad words abroad. Brother, what have you done with my daughter?"

Had the Indian come and stormed, begged money of him, sponged on him, or abused him, he had taken it very calmly—he would, in fact, have been superior. But there was dignity in the chief's manner; there was solemnity in his speech; his voice conveyed resoluteness and earnestness, which the stoic calm of his face might not have suggested; and Armour felt that he had no advantage at all. Besides, Armour had a conscience, though he had played some rare tricks with it of late, and it needed more hardihood than he possessed to face this old man down. And why face him down? Lali was his daughter, blood of his blood, the chieftainess of one branch of his people, honoured at least among these poor savages, and the old man had a right to ask, as asked another more famous, "Where is my daughter?"

His hands in his pockets, Armour sat silent for a minute, eyeing his boot, as he swung his leg to and fro. Presently he said: "Eye-of-the-Moon, I don't think I can talk as poetically as you, even in my own lan-

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guage, and I shall not try. But I should like to ask you this: Do you believe any harm has come to your daughter—to my wife?"

The old Indian forgot to blow the tobacco-smoke from his mouth, and, as he sat debating, lips slightly apart, it came leaking out in little trailing clouds and gave a strange appearance to his iron-featured face. He looked steadily at Armour, and said: "You are of those who rule in your land,"—here Armour protested,—"you have much gold to buy and sell. I am a chief,"—he drew himself up,—"I am poor: we speak with the straight tongue; it is cowards who lie. Speak deep as from the heart, my brother, and tell me where my daughter is."

Armour could not but respect the chief for the way this request was put, but still it galled him to think that he was under suspicion of having done any bodily injury to his wife, so he quietly persisted: "Do you think I have done Lali any harm?"

"The thing is strange," replied the other. "You are of those who are great among your people. You married a daughter of a red man. Then she was yours for less than one moon, and you sent her far away, and you stayed. Her father was as a dog in your sight. Do men whose hearts are clear act so? They have said strange things of you. I have not believed; but it is good I know all, that I may say to the tale-bearers, 'You have crooked tongues.'"

Armour sat for a moment longer, his face turned to the open window. He was perfectly still, but he had become grave. He was about to reply to the chief, when the trader entered the room hurriedly with a newspaper in his hand. He paused abruptly when he saw Eye-of-the-Moon. Armour felt that the trader had

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something important to communicate. He guessed it was in the paper. He mutely held out his hand for it. The trader handed it to him hesitatingly, at the same time pointing to a paragraph, and saying: "It is nearly two years old, as you see. I chanced upon it by accident to-day."

It was a copy of a London evening paper, containing a somewhat sensational account of Lali's accident. It said that she was in a critical condition. This time Armour did not ask for brandy, but the trader put it out beside him. He shook his head. "Gordon," he said presently, "I shall leave here in the morning. Please send my men to me."

The trader whispered to him: "She was all right, of course, long ago, Mr. Armour, or you would have heard."

Armour looked at the date of the paper. He had several letters from England of a later date, and these said nothing of her illness. It bewildered him, made him uneasy. Perhaps the first real sense of his duty as a husband came home to him there. For the first time he was anxious about the woman for her own sake. The trader had left the room.

"What a scoundrel I've been!" said Armour between his teeth, oblivious, for the moment, of Eye-of-the-Moon's presence. Presently, bethinking himself, he turned to the Indian. "I've been debating," he said. "Eye-of-the-Moon, my wife is in England, at my father's home. I am going to her. Men have lied in thinking I would do her any injury, but—but—never mind, the harm was of another kind. It isn't wise for a white man and an Indian to marry, but when they are married—well, they must live as man and wife should live, and, as I said, I am going to my wife."

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To say all this to a common Indian, whose only property was a dozen ponies and a couple of tepees, required something very like moral courage; but then Armour had not been exercising moral courage during the last year or so, and its exercise was profitable to him. The next morning he was on his way to Montreal, and Eye-of-the-Moon was the richest chief in British North America, at that moment, by five thousand dollars or so.

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CHAPTER VIII

TO EVERY MAN HIS HOUR

It was the close of the season: many people had left town, but festivities were still on. To a stranger the season might have seemed at its height. The Armours were giving a large party in Cavendish Square before going back again to Greyhope, where, for the sake of Lali and her child, they intended to remain during the rest of the summer, in preference to going on the Continent or to Scotland. The only unsatisfactory feature of Lali's season was the absence of her husband. Naturally there were those who said strange things regarding Frank Armour's stay in America; but it was pretty generally known that he was engaged in land speculations, and his club friends, who perhaps took the pleasantest view of the matter, said that he was very wise indeed, if a little cowardly, in staying abroad until his wife was educated and ready to take her position in society. There was one thing on which they were all agreed: Mrs. Frank Armour either had a mind superior to the charms of their sex, or was incapable of that vanity which hath many suitors, and says: "So far shalt thou go, and—" The fact is, Mrs. Frank Armour's mind was superior. She had only one object—to triumph over her husband grandly, as a woman righteously might. She had vanity, of course, but it was not ignoble. She kept one thing in view; she lived for it. Her translation had been successful. There were times when she remembered her father, the wild days on the

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prairies, the buffalo-hunt, tracking the deer, tribal battles, the long silent hours of the winter, and the warm summer nights when she slept in the prairie grass or camped with her people in the trough of a great land-wave. Sometimes the hunger for its freedom, and its idleness, and its sport, came to her greatly; but she thought of her child, and she put it from her. She was ambitious for him; she was keen to prove her worth as a wife against her husband's unworthiness. This perhaps saved her. She might have lost had her life been without this motive.

The very morning of this notable reception, General Armour had received a note from Frank Armour's solicitor, saying that his son was likely to arrive in London from America that day or the next. Frank had written to his people no word of his coming; to his wife, as we have said, he had not written for months; and before he started back he would not write, because he wished to make what amends he could in person. He expected to find her improved, of course, but still he could only think of her as an Indian, showing her common prairie origin. His knowledge of her before their marriage had been particularly brief; she was little more in his eyes than a thousand other Indian women, save that she was better-looking, was whiter than most, and had finer features. He could not very clearly remember the tones of her voice, because after marriage, and before he had sent her to England, he had seen little or nothing of her.

When General Armour received the news of Frank's return he told his wife and Marion, and they consulted together whether it were good to let Lali know at once. He might arrive that evening. If so, the position would be awkward, because it was impossible to tell how it

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might affect her. If they did tell her, and Frank happened not to arrive, it might unnerve her so as to make her appearance in the evening doubtful. Richard, the wiseacre, the inexhaustible Richard, was caring for his cottagers and cutting the leaves of new books—his chiefest pleasure—at Greyhope. They felt it was a matter they ought to be able to decide for themselves, but still it was the last evening of Lali's stay in town, and they did not care to take any risk. Strange to say, they had come to take pride in their son's wife; for even General and Mrs. Armour, high-minded and of serene social status as they were, seemed not quite insensible to the pleasure of being an axle on which a system of social notoriety revolved.

At the opportune moment Captain Vidall was announced, and, because he and Marion were soon to carry but one name between them, he was called into family consultation. It is somewhat singular that in this case the women were quite wrong and the men were quite right. For General Armour and Captain Vidall were for silence until Frank came, if he came that day, or for telling her the following morning, when the function was over. And the men prevailed.

Marion was much excited all day; she had given orders that Frank's room should be made ready, but for whom she gave no information. While Lali was dressing for the evening, something excited and nervous, she entered her room. They were now the best of friends. The years had seen many shifting scenes in their companionship; they had been as often at war as at peace; but they had respected each other, each after her own fashion; and now they had a real and mutual regard. Lali's was a slim, lithe figure, wearing its fashionable robes with an air of possession; and the

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face above it, if not entirely beautiful, had a strange, warm fascination. The girl had not been a chieftainess for nothing. A look of quiet command was there, but also a far-away expression which gave a faint look of sadness even when a smile was at the lips. The smile itself did not come quickly, it grew; but above it all was hair of perfect brown,—most rare,—setting off her face as a plume does a helmet. She showed no surprise when Marion entered. She welcomed her with a smile and outstretched hand, but said nothing.

"Lali," said Marion somewhat abruptly,—she scarcely knew why she said it,—"are you happy?"

It was strange how the Indian girl had taken on those little manners of society which convey so much by inflection. She lifted her eyebrows at Marion, and said presently, in a soft, deliberate voice, "Come, Marion, we will go and see little Richard; then I shall be happy."

She linked her arm through Marion's. Marion drummed her fingers lightly on the beautiful arm, and then fell to wondering what she should say next. They passed into the room where the child lay sleeping; they went to his little bed, and Lali stretched out her hand gently, touching the curls of the child. Running a finger through one delicately, she said, with a still softer tone than before: "Why should not one be happy?"

Marion looked up slowly into her eyes, let a hand fall on her shoulder gently, and replied: "Lali, do you never wish Frank to come?"

Lali's fingers came from the child, the colour mounted slowly to her forehead, and she drew the girl away again into the other room. Then she turned and faced Marion, a deep fire in her eyes, and said, in a whisper almost hoarse in its intensity: "Yes; I wish he would come to-night."

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She looked harder yet at Marion; then, with a flash of pride and her hands clasping before her, she drew herself up, and added: "Am I not worthy to be his wife now? Am I not beautiful—for a savage?"

There was no common vanity in the action. It had a noble kind of wistfulness, and a serenity that entirely redeemed it. Marion dated her own happiness from the time when Lali met her accident, for in the evening of that disastrous day she issued to Captain Hume Vidall a commission which he could never—wished never—to resign. Since then she had been at her best,—we are all more or less selfish creatures,—and had grown gentler, curbing the delicate imperiousness of her nature, and frankly, and without the least pique, taken a secondary position of interest in the household, occasioned by Lali's popularity. She looked Lali up and down with a glance in which many feelings met, and then, catching her hands warmly, she lifted them, put them on her own shoulders, and said: "My dear beautiful savage, you are fit and worthy to be Queen of England; and Frank, when he comes—"

"Hush!" said the other dreamily, and put a finger on Marion's lips. "I know what you are going to say, but I do not wish to hear it. He did not love me then. He used me—" She shuddered, put her hands to her eyes with a pained, trembling motion, then threw her head back with a quick sigh. "But I will not speak of it. Come, we are for the dance, Marion. It is the last, to-night. To-morrow—" She paused, looking straight before her, lost in thought.

"Yes, to-morrow, Lali?"

"I do not know about to-morrow," was the reply. "Strange things come to me."

Marion longed to tell her then and there the great

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news, but she was afraid to do so, and was, moreover, withheld by the remembrance that it had been agreed she should not be told. She said nothing.

At eleven o'clock the rooms were filled. For the fag end of the season, people seemed unusually brilliant. The evening itself was not so hot as common, and there was an extra array of distinguished guests. Marion was nervous all the evening, though she showed little of it, being most prettily employed in making people pleased with themselves. Mrs. Armour also was not free from apprehension. In reply to inquiries concerning her son she said, as she had often said during the season, that he might be back at any time now. Lali had answered always in the same fashion, and had shown no sign that his continued absence was singular. As the evening wore on, the probability of Frank's appearance seemed less; and the Armours began to breathe more freely.

Frank had, however, arrived. He had driven straight from Euston to Cavendish Square, but, seeing the house lighted up, and guests arriving, he had a sudden feeling of uncertainty. He ordered the cabman to take him to his club. There he put himself in evening-dress, and drove back again to the house. He entered quietly. At the moment the hall was almost deserted; people were mostly in the ballroom and supper-room. He paused a moment, biting his moustache as if in perplexity. A strange timidity came on him. All his old dash and self-possession seemed to have forsaken him. Presently, seeing a number of people entering the hall, he made for the staircase, and went hastily up. Mechanically he went to his own room, and found it lighted. Flowers were set about, and everything was made ready

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Glancing up, he saw his face in a mirror. It was bronzed, but it looked rather old and careworn. He shrugged a shoulder at that. Then, in the mirror, he saw also something else. It startled him so that he sat perfectly still for a moment looking at it. It was some one laughing at him over his shoulder—a child! He got to his feet and turned round. On the table was a very large photograph of a smiling child—with *his* eyes, *his* face. He caught the chair-arm, and stood looking at it a little wildly. Then he laughed a strange laugh, and the tears leaped to his eyes. He caught the picture in his hands, and kissed it,—very foolishly, men not fathers might think,—and read the name beneath, *Richard Joseph Armour;* and again, beneath that, the date of birth. He then put it back on the table and sat looking at it—looking, and forgetting, and remembering.

Presently, the door opened, and some one entered. It was Marion. She had seen him pass through the hall; she had then gone and told her father and mother, to prepare them, and had followed him upstairs. He did not hear her. She stepped softly forwards. "Frank!" she said—"Frank!" and laid a hand on his shoulder. He started up and turned his face on her. Then he caught her hands and kissed her. "Marion!" he said, and he could say no more. But presently he pointed towards the photograph.

She nodded her head. "Yes, it is your child, Frank. Though, of course, you don't deserve it. . . . Frank dear," she added, "I am glad—we shall all be glad—to have you back; but you are a wicked man." She felt she must say that.

Now he only nodded, and still looked at the portrait. "Where is—my wife?" he added presently.

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"She is in the ballroom." Marion was wondering what was best to do.

He caught his thumb-nail in his teeth. He winced in spite of himself. "I will go to her," he said, "and then—the baby."

"I am glad," she replied, "that you have so much sense of justice left, Frank: the wife first, the baby afterwards. But do you think you deserve either?"

He became moody, and made an impatient gesture. "Lady Agnes Martling is here, and also Lady Haldwell," she persisted cruelly. She did not mind, because she knew he would have enough to compensate him afterwards.

"Marion," he said, "say it all, and let me have it over. Say what you like, and I'll not whimper. I'll face it. But I want to see my child."

She was sorry for him. She had really wanted to see how much he was capable of feeling in the matter. "Wait here, Frank," she said. "That will be best; and I will bring your wife to you."

He said nothing, but assented with a motion of the hand, and she left him where he was. He braced himself for the interview. Assuredly a man loses something of natural courage and self-confidence when he has done a thing of which he should be, and is, ashamed.

It seemed a long time (it was in reality but a couple of minutes) before the door opened again, and Marion said: "Frank, your wife!" and then retreated.

The door closed, leaving a stately figure standing just inside it. The figure did not move forwards, but stood there, full of life and fine excitement, but very still also.

Frank Armour was confounded. He came forwards slowly, looking hard. Was this distinguished, hand-

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some, reproachful woman his wife—Lali, the Indian girl, whom he had married in a fit of pique and brandy? He could hardly believe his eyes; and yet hers looked out at him with something that he remembered too, together with something which he did not remember, making him uneasy. Clearly, his great mistake had turned from ashes into fruit. "Lali!" he said, and held out his hand.

She reached out hers courteously, but her fingers gave him no response.

"We have many things to say to each other," she said, "but they cannot be said now. I shall be missed from the ballroom."

"Missed from the ballroom!" He almost laughed to think how strange this sounded in his ears. As if interpreting his thought, she added: "You see, it is our last affair of the season, and we are all anxious to do our duty perfectly. Will you go down with me? We can talk afterwards."

Her continued self-possession utterly confused him. She had utterly confused Marion also, when told that her husband was in the house. She had had presentiments, and, besides, she had been schooling herself for this hour for a long time. She turned towards the door.

"But," he asked, like a supplicant, "our child! I want to see the boy."

She lifted her eyebrows, then, seeing the photograph of the baby on the table, understood how he knew. "Come with me, then," she said, with a little more feeling.

She led the way along the landing, and paused at her door. "Remember that we have to appear amongst the guests directly," she said, as though to warn him

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against any demonstration. Then they entered. She went over to the cot and drew back the fleecy curtain from over the sleeping boy's head. His fingers hungered to take his child to his arms. "He is magnificent —magnificent!" he said, with a great pride. "Why did you never let me know of it?"

"How could I tell what you would do?" she calmly replied. "You married me—wickedly, and used me wickedly afterwards; and I loved the child."

"You loved the child," he repeated after her. "Lali," he added, "I don't deserve it, but forgive me, if you can—for the child's sake."

"We had better go below," she calmly replied. "We have both duties to do. You will of course—appear with me—before them?"

The slight irony in the tone cut him horribly. He offered his arm in silence. They passed on to the staircase.

"It is necessary," she said, "to appear cheerful before one's guests."

She had him at an advantage at every point. "We will be cheerful, then," was his reply, spoken with a grim kind of humour. "You have learned it all, haven't you?" he added.

They were just entering the ballroom. "Yes, with your kind help—and absence," she replied.

The surprise of the guests was somewhat diminished by the fact that Marion, telling General Armour and his wife first of Frank's return, industriously sent the news buzzing about the room.

The two went straight to Frank's father and mother. Their parts were all excellently played. Then Frank mingled among the guests, being very heartily greeted, and heard congratulations on all sides. Old club friends

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rallied him as a deserter, and new acquaintances flocked about him; and presently he awakened to the fact that his Indian wife had been an interest of the season, was not the least admired person present. It was altogether too good luck for him; but he had an uncomfortable conviction that he had a long path of penance to walk before he could hope to enjoy it.

All at once he met Lady Haldwell, who, in spite of all, still accepted invitations to General Armour's house—the strange scene between Lali and herself never having been disclosed to the family. He had nothing but bitterness in his heart for her, but he spoke a few smooth words, and she languidly congratulated him on his bronzed appearance. He asked for a dance, but she had not one to give him. As she was leaving, she suddenly turned as though she had forgotten something, and looking at him, said: "I forgot to congratulate you on your marriage. I hope it is not too late?"

He bowed. "Your congratulations are so sincere," he said, "that they would be *à propos* late or early."

When he stood with his wife whilst the guests were leaving, and saw with what manner she carried it all off, —as though she had been born in the good land of good breeding,—he was moved alternately with wonder and shame—shame that he had intended this noble creature as a sacrifice to his ugly temper and spite.

When all the guests were gone and the family stood alone in the drawing-room, a silence suddenly fell amongst them. Presently Marion said to her mother in a half-whisper, "I wish Richard were here."

They all felt the extreme awkwardness of the situation, especially when Lali bade General Armour, Mrs. Armour, and Marion good-night, and then, turning to her husband, said, "Good-night"—she did not even

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speak his name. "Perhaps you would care to ride to-morrow morning? I always go to the Park at ten, and this will be my last ride of the season."

Had she written out an elaborate proclamation of her intended attitude towards her husband, it could not have more clearly conveyed her mind than this little speech, delivered as to a most friendly acquaintance. General Armour pulled his moustache fiercely, and, it is possible, enjoyed the situation, despite its peril. Mrs. Armour turned to the mantel and seemed tremulously engaged in arranging some bric-à-brac. Marion, however, with a fine instinct, slid her arm through that of Lali, and gently said: "Yes, of course Frank will be glad of a ride in the Park. He used to ride with me every morning. But let us go, us three, and kiss the baby good-night—'good-night till we meet in the morning.'"

She linked her arm now through Frank's, and as she did so he replied to Lali: "I shall be glad to ride in the morning, but—"

"But we can arrange it at breakfast," said his wife hurriedly. At the same time she allowed herself to be drawn away to the hall with her husband.

He was very angry, but he knew he had no right to be so. He choked back his wrath and moved on amiably enough, and suddenly the fashion in which the tables had been turned on him struck him with its tragic comedy, and he involuntarily smiled. His sense of humour saved him from words and acts which might possibly have made the matter a pure tragedy after all. He loosed his arm from Marion's.

"I must bid father and mother good-night. Then I will join you both—'in the court of the king.'" And he turned and went back, and said to his father as

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he kissed his mother: "I am had at an advantage, General."

"And serves you right, my boy. You had the odds with you, but she has captured them like a born soldier."

His mother said to him gently: "Frank, you blamed us, but remember that we wished only your good. Take my advice, dear, and try to love your wife and win her confidence."

"Love her—*try* to love her!" he said. "I shall easily do that. But the other—?" He shook his head a little, though what he meant perhaps he did not know quite himself, and then followed Marion and Lali upstairs. Marion had tried to escape from Lali, but was told that she must stay; and the three met at the child's cot. Marion stooped down and kissed its forehead. Frank stooped also and kissed its cheek. Then the wife kissed the other cheek. The child slept peacefully on.

"You can always see the baby here before breakfast, if you choose," said Lali; and she held out her hand again in good-night. At this point Marion stole away, in spite of Lali's quick little cry of "Wait, Marion!" and the two were left alone again.

"I am very tired," she said. "I would rather not talk to-night." The dismissal was evident.

He took her hand, held it an instant, and presently said: "I will not detain you, but I would ask you, Lali, to remember that you are my wife. Nothing can alter that."

"Still we are only strangers, as you know," she quietly rejoined.

"You forget the days we were together—after we were married," he cautiously urged.

"I am not the same girl, . . . you killed her. . . . We have to start again. . . . I know all."

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"You know that in my wretched anger and madness I—"

"Oh, please do not speak of it," she said; "it is so bad even in thought."

"But will you never forgive me, and care for me? We have to live our lives together."

"Pray let us not speak of it now," she said, in a weary voice; then, breathlessly: "It is of much more consequence that you should love me—and the child."

He drew himself up with a choking sigh, and spread out his arms to her. "Oh, my wife!" he exclaimed.

"No, no," she cried, "this is unreasonable; we know so little of each other. . . . Good-night, again."

He turned at the door, came back, and, stooping, kissed the child on the lips. Then he said: "You are right. I deserve to suffer. . . . Good-night."

But when he was gone she dropped on her knees, and kissed the child many times on the lips also.

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CHAPTER IX

THE FAITH OF COMRADES

WHEN Francis Armour left his wife's room he did not go to his own, but quietly descended the stairs, went to the library, and sat down. The loneliest thing in the world is to be *tête-à-tête* with one's conscience. A man may have a bad hour with an enemy, a sad hour with a friend, a peaceful hour with himself, but when the little dwarf, conscience, perches upon every hillock of remembrance and makes slow signs—those strange symbols of the language of the soul—to him, no slave upon the tread-mill suffers more.

The butler came in to see if anything was required, but Armour only greeted him silently and waved him away. His brain was painfully alert, his memory singularly awake. It seemed that the incident of this hour had so opened up every channel of his intelligence that all his life ran past him in fantastic panorama, as by that illumination which comes to the drowning man. He seemed under some strange spell. Once or twice he rose, rubbed his eyes, and looked round the room—the room where as a boy he had spent idle hours, where as a student he had been in the hands of his tutor, and as a young man had found recreations such as belong to ambitious and ardent youth. Every corner was familiar. Nothing was changed. The books upon the shelves were as they were placed twenty years ago. And yet he did not seem a part of it. It did not seem natural to him. He was in an atmosphere of strange-

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ness—that atmosphere which surrounds a man, as by a cloud, when some crisis comes upon him and his life seems to stand still, whirling upon its narrow base, while the world appears at an interminable distance, even as to a deaf man who sees yet cannot hear.

There came home to him at that moment with a force indescribable the shamelessness of the act he committed four years ago. He had thought to come back to miserable humiliation. For four years he had refused to do his duty as a man towards an innocent woman,—a woman, though in part a savage,—now transformed into a gentle, noble creature of delight and goodness. How had he deserved it? He had sown the storm, it was but just that he should reap the whirlwind; he had scattered thistles, could he expect to gather grapes? He knew that the sympathy of all his father's house was not with him, but with the woman he had wronged. He was glad it was so. Looking back now, it seemed so poor and paltry a thing that he, a man, should stoop to revenge himself upon those who had given him birth, as a kind of insult to the woman who had lightly set him aside, and should use for that purpose a helpless, confiding girl. To revenge one's self for wrong to one's self is but a common passion, which has little dignity; to avenge some one whom one has loved, man or woman,—and, before all, woman,—has some touch of nobility, is redeemed by loyalty. For his act there was not one word of defence to be made, and he was not prepared to make it.

The cigars and liquors were beside him, but he did not touch them. He seemed very far away from the ordinary details of his life: he knew he had before him hard travel, and he was not confident of the end. He could not tell how long he sat there. After a time the

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ticking of the clock seemed painfully loud to him. Now and again he heard a cab rattling through the Square, and the foolish song of some drunken loiterer in the night caused him to start painfully. Everything jarred on him. Once he got up, went to the window, and looked out. The moon was shining full on the Square. He wondered if it would be well for him to go out and find some quiet to his nerves in walking. He did so. Out in the Square he looked up to his wife's window. It was lighted. Long time he walked up and down, his eyes on the window. It held him like a charm. Once he leaned against the iron railings of the garden and looked up, not moving for a time. Presently he saw the curtain of the window raised, and against the dim light of the room was outlined the figure of his wife. He knew it. She stood for a moment looking out into the night. She could not see him, nor could he see her features at all plainly, but he knew that she, like him, was alone with the catastrophe which his wickedness had sent upon her. Soon the curtain was drawn down again, and then he went once more to the house and took his old seat beside the table. He fell to brooding, and at last, exhausted, dropped to a troubled sleep.

He woke with a start. Some one was in the room. He heard a step behind him. He came to his feet quickly, a wild light in his eyes. He faced his brother Richard.

Late in the afternoon Marion had telegraphed to Richard that Frank was coming. He had been away visiting some poor and sick people, and when he came back to Greyhope it was too late to catch the train. But the horses were harnessed straightway, and he was driven into town, a three-hours' drive. He had left the horses at the stables, and, having a latch-key, had

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come in quietly. He had seen the light in the study, and guessed who was there. He entered, and saw his brother asleep. He watched him for a moment and studied him. Then he moved away to take off his hat, and, as he did so, stumbled slightly. Then it was Frank waked, and for the first time in five years they looked each other in the eyes. They both stood immovable for a moment, and then Richard caught Frank's hand in both of his and said: "God bless you, my boy! I am glad you are back."

"Dick! Dick!" was the reply, and Frank's other hand clutched Richard's shoulder in his strong emotion. They stood silent for a moment longer, and then Richard recovered himself. He waved his hand to the chairs. The strain of the situation was a little painful for them both. Men are shy with each other where their emotions are in play.

"Why, my boy," he said, waving a hand to the spirits and liqueurs, "full bottles and unopened boxes? Tut, tut! here's a pretty how-d'ye-do. Is this the way you toast the home quarters? You're a fine soldier for an old mess!"

So saying, he poured out some whiskey, then opened the box of cigars and pushed them towards his brother. He did not care particularly to drink or smoke himself, but a man—an Englishman—is a strange creature. He is most natural and at ease when he is engaged in eating and drinking. He relieves every trying situation by some frivolous and selfish occupation, as of dismembering a partridge, or mixing a punch.

"Well, Frank," said his brother, "now what have you to say for yourself? Why didn't you come long ago? You have played the adventurer for five years, and what have you to show for it? Have you a fortune?" Frank

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shook his head, and twisted a shoulder. "What have you done that is worth the doing, then?"

"Nothing that I intended to do, Dick," was the grave reply.

"Yes, I imagined that. You have seen *them*, have you?" he added, in a softer voice.

Frank blew a great cloud of smoke about his face, and through it he said: "Yes, I have seen a damned sight more than I deserved to see."

"Oh, of course; I know that, my boy; but, so far as I can see, in another direction you are getting quite what you deserve: your wife and child are upstairs—you are here."

He paused, was silent for a moment, then leaned over, caught his brother's arm, and said, in a low, strenuous voice: "Frank Armour, you laid a hateful little plot for us. It wasn't manly, but we forgave it and did the best we could. But see here, Frank, take my word for it, you have had a lot of luck. There isn't one woman out of ten thousand that would have stood the test as your wife has stood it; injured at the start, constant neglect, temptation—" he paused. "My boy, did you ever think of that, of the temptation to a woman neglected by her husband? The temptation to men? Yes, you have had a lot of luck. There has been a special providence for you, my boy; but not for your sake. God doesn't love neglectful husbands, but I think He is pretty sorry for neglected wives."

Frank was very still. His head drooped, the cigar hung unheeded in his fingers for a moment, and he said at last: "Dick, old boy, I've thought it all over to-night since I came back—everything that you've said. I have not a word of defence to make, but, by heaven! I'm going to win my wife's love if I can, and

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when I do it I'll make up for all my cursed foolishness —see if I don't."

"That sounds well, Frank," was the quiet reply. "I like to hear you talk that way. You would be very foolish if you did not. What do you think of the child?"

"Can you ask me what I think? He is a splendid little fellow."

"Take care of him, then—take good care of him: you may never have another," was the grim rejoinder.

Frank winced. His brother rose, took his arm, and said: "Let us go to our rooms, Frank. There will be time enough to talk later, and I am not so young as I once was."

Truth to say, Richard Armour was not so young as he seemed a few months before. His shoulders were a little stooped, he was greyer about the temples. The little bit of cynicism which had appeared in that remark about the care of the child showed also in the lines of his mouth; yet his eyes had the same old true, honest look. But a man cannot be hit in mortal places once or twice in his life without its being etched on his face or dropped like a pinch of aloe from his tongue.

Still they sat and talked much longer, Frank showing better than when his brother came, Richard gone grey and tired. At last Richard rose and motioned towards the window. "See, Frank," he said, "it is morning." Then he went and lifted the blind. The grey, unpurged air oozed on the glass. The light was breaking over the tops of the houses. A crossing-sweeper early to his task, or holding the key of the street, went pottering by, and a policeman glanced up at them as he passed. Richard drew down the curtain again.

"Dick," said Frank suddenly, "you look old. I wonder if I have changed as much?"

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Six months before, Frank Armour would have said that his brother looked young.

"Oh, you look young enough, Frank," was the reply. "But I am a good deal older than I was five years ago. . . . Come, let us go to bed."

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CHAPTER X

THOU KNOWEST THE SECRETS OF OUR HEARTS

And Lali? How had the night gone for her? When she rose from the child's cot, where her lips had caught the warmth that her husband had left on them, she stood for a moment bewildered in the middle of the room. She looked at the door out of which he had gone, her bosom beating hard, her heart throbbing so that it hurt her—that she could have cried out from mere physical pain. The wifedom in her was plundering the wild stores of her generous soul for the man, for—as Richard had said that day, that memorable day!—the father of her child. But the woman, the pure translated woman, who was born anew when this frail life in its pink and white glory crept out into the dazzling world, shrank back, as any girl might shrink that had not known marriage. This child had come—from what? She shuddered now—how many times had she done so since she first waked to the vulgar sacrilege of her marriage? She knew now that every good mother, when her first child is born, takes it in her arms, and, all her agony gone, and the ineffable peace of delivered motherhood come, speaks the name of its father, and calls it his child. But—she remembered it now—when her child was born, this little waif, the fruit of a man's hot, malicious hour, she wrapped it in her arms, pressed its delicate flesh to the silken folds of her bosom, and weeping, whispered only: "My child, my little, little child!"

She had never, as many a wife far from her husband

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has done, talked to her child of its father, told it of his beauty and his virtues, arrayed it day by day in sweet linen and pretty adornments, as if he were just then knocking at her door; she had never imagined what he would say when he did come. What could such a father think of his child, born of a woman whose very life he had intended as an insult? No, she had loved it for father and mother also. She had tried to be good, a good mother, living a life unutterably lonely, hard in all that it involved of study, new duty, translation, and burial of primitive emotions. And with all the care and tearful watchfulness that had been needed, she had grown so proud, so exacting—exacting for her child, proud for herself.

How could she know now that this hasty declaration of affection was anything more than the mere man in him? Years ago she had not been able to judge between love and insult—what guarantee had she here? Did he think that she could believe in him? She was not the woman he had married, he was not the man she had married. He had deceived her basely—she had been a common chattel. She had been miserable enough—could she give herself over to his flying emotions again so suddenly?

She paced the room, her face now in her hands, her hands now clasping and wringing before her. Her wifely duty? She straightened to that. Duty! She was first and before all a good, unpolluted woman. No, no, it could not be. Love him? Again she shrank. Then came flooding on her that afternoon when she had flung herself on Richard's breast, and all those hundred days of happiness in Richard's company—Richard the considerate, the strong, who had stood so by his honour in an hour of peril.

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Now as she thought of it a hot wave shivered through all her body, and tingled to her hair. Her face again dropped in her hands, and, as on that other day, she knelt beside the cot, and, bursting into tears, said through her sobs: "My baby, my own dear baby! Oh, that we could go away—away—and never come back again!"

She did not know how intense her sobs were. They waked the child from its delicate sleep; its blue eyes opened wide and wise all on the instant, its round soft arm ran up to its mother's neck, and it said: "Don't c'y! I want to s'eep wif you! I'se so s'eepy!"

She caught the child to her wet face, smiled at it through her tears, went with it to her own bed, put it away in the deep whiteness, kissed it, and fondled it away again into the heaven of sleep. When this was done she felt calmer. How she hungered over it! This —this could not be denied her. This, at least, was all hers, without clause or reservation, an absolute love, and an absolute right.

She disrobed and drew in beside the child, and its little dewy cheek touching her breast seemed to ease the ache in her soul.

But sleep would not come. All the past four years trooped by, with their thousand incidents magnified in the sharp, throbbing light of her mind, and at last she knew and saw clearly what was before her, what trials, what duty, and what honour demanded—her honour.

Richard? Once for all she gently put him away from her into that infinite distance of fine respect which a good woman can feel, who has known what she and Richard had known—and set aside. But he had made for her so high a standard, that for one to be measured thereby was a severe challenge.

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Could Frank come even to that measure? She dared not try to answer the question. She feared, she shrank, she grew sick at heart. She did not reckon with that other thing, that powerful, infinite influence which ties a woman, she knows not how or why, to the man who led her to the world of motherhood. Through all the wrongs which she may suffer by him, there runs this cable of unhappy attraction, testified to by how many sorrowful lives!

But Lali was trying to think it out, not only to feel, and she did not count that subterranean force which must play its part in this new situation in her drama of life. Could she love him? She crept away out of the haven where her child was, put on her dressing-gown, went to the window, and looked out upon the night, all unconscious that her husband was looking at her from the Square below. Love him?—Love him?—Love him? Could she? Did he love her? Her eyes wandered over the Square. Nowhere else was there a light, but a chimney-flue was creaking somewhere. It jarred on her so that she shrank. Then all at once she smiled to think how she had changed. Four years ago she could have slept amid the hammers of a foundry. The noise ceased. Her eyes passed from the cloud of trees in the Square to the sky—all stars, and restful deep blue. That—that was the same. How she knew it! Orion and Ashtaroth, and Mars and the Pleiades, and the long trail of the Milky Way. As a little child hanging in the trees, or sprawled beside a tepee, she had made friends with them all, even as she learned and loved all the signs of the earth beneath—the twist of a blade of grass, the portent in the cry of a river-hen, the colour of a star, the smell of a wind. She had known Nature then, now she knew men. And knowing them,

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CHAPTER XI

UPON THE HIGHWAY

FRANK visited the child in the morning, and was received with a casual interest. Richard Joseph Armour was fastidious, was not to be won at the grand gallop. Besides, he had just had a visit from his uncle, and the good taste of that gay time was yet in his mouth. He did not resent the embraces, but he did not respond to them, and he straightened himself with relief when the assault was over. Some one was paying homage to him, that was all he knew; but for his own satisfaction and pleasure he preferred as yet his old comrades, Edward Lambert, Captain Vidall, General Armour, and, above all, Richard. He only showed real interest at the last, when he asked, as it were in compromise, if his father would give him a sword. No one had ever talked to him of his father, and he had no instinct for him so far as could be seen. The sword was, therefore, after the manner of a concession. Frank rashly promised it, and was promptly told by Marion that it couldn't be; and she was backed by Captain Vidall, who said it had already been tabooed, and Frank wasn't to come in and ask for favours or expect them.

The husband and wife met at breakfast. He was down first. When his wife entered, he came to her, they touched hands, and she presently took a seat beside him. More than once he paused suddenly in his eating, when he thought of his inexplicable case. He was now face to face with a reversed situation. He

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"Well, well, Lali, we've got the wild man
safe and sound, haven't we—the same old
We'll have to turn him into a Christian
while the lamp holds out to burn'—"

He did not give her time to reply, but th
honestly, kindly, and from the look they
into life and time again with a fresh courag
not know, nor did he, how near they had
abyss; and neither ever knew. One furti
the moment, one hesitating pressure of th
movement of the head from each other's ga
had been unhappiness for them all. Bu
safe.

In the Park, Frank and his wife talked l
met many who greeted them cordially, and
Frank's old club friends summoned him to
fires at his earliest opportunity. The two t
of the people they met, and Frank thrilled w
tion at his wife's gentle judgment of everyb

"The true thing, absolutely the true thing
and he was conscious, too, that her instincts
and searching, for once or twice he saw her
little when they met one or two men whose
as chauffeurs, the dresses were pronounced.
had had one or two confusing minutes with
time.

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easy."

"Thank you," [illegible] I suppose I w
too well to ride b[illegible] I began your
not so good as M[illegible] look, too!"
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"Well, well, Lali, we've got the wild man home again safe and sound, haven't we—the same old vagabond? We'll have to turn him into a Christian again—'For while the lamp holds out to burn'—"

He did not give her time to reply, but their eyes met honestly, kindly, and from the look they both passed into life and time again with a fresh courage. She did not know, nor did he, how near they had been to an abyss; and neither ever knew. One furtive glance at the moment, one hesitating pressure of the hand, one movement of the head from each other's gaze, and there had been unhappiness for them all. But they were safe.

In the Park, Frank and his wife talked little. They met many who greeted them cordially, and numbers of Frank's old club friends summoned him to the sacred fires at his earliest opportunity. The two talked chiefly of the people they met, and Frank thrilled with admiration at his wife's gentle judgment of everybody.

"The true thing, absolutely the true thing," he said; and he was conscious, too, that her instincts were right and searching, for once or twice he saw her face chill a little when they met one or two men whose reputations as *chevaliers des dames* were pronounced. These men had had one or two confusing minutes with Lali in their time.

"How splendidly you ride!" he said, as he came up swiftly to her, after having chatted for a moment with Edward Lambert. "You sit like wax, and so entirely easy."

"Thank you," she said. "I suppose I really like it too well to ride badly, and then I began young on horses not so good as Musket here—bareback, too!" she added, with a little soft irony.

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He thought—she did not, however—that she was referring to that first letter he sent home to his people, when he consigned her, like any other awkward freight, to their care. He flushed to his eyes. It cut him deep, but her eyes only had a distant, dreamy look which conveyed nothing of the sting in her words. Like most men, he had a touch of vanity too, and he might have resented the words vaguely, had he not remembered his talk with his mother an hour before.

She had begged him to have patience, she had made him promise that he would not in any circumstance say an ungentle or bitter thing, that he would bide the effort of constant devotion, and his love of the child. Especially must he try to reach her through love of the child.

By which it will be seen that Mrs. Armour had come to some wisdom by reason of her love for Frank's wife and child.

"My son," she had said, "through the child is the surest way, believe me; for only a mother can understand what that means, how much and how far it goes. You are a father, but until last night you never had the flush of that love in your veins. You stand yet only at the door of that life which has done more to guide, save, instruct, and deepen your wife's life than anything else, though your brother Richard—to whom you owe a debt that you can never repay—has done much indeed. Be wise, my dear, as I have learned a little to be since first your wife came. All might easily have gone wrong. It has all gone well; and we, my son, have tried to do our duty lovingly, consistently, to dear Lali and the child."

She made him promise that he would wait, that he

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she said, "you are only legally married, not morally, not as God can bless—not yet. But I pray that what will sanctify all may come soon, very soon, to the joy of us all. But again—and I cannot say it too prayerfully—do not force one little claim that your marriage gave you, but prove yourself to her, who has cause to distrust you so much. Will you forgive your mother, my dear, for speaking to you?"

He had told her then that what she had asked he had intended as his own course, yet what she had said would keep it in his mind always, for he was sure it was right. Mrs. Armour had then embraced him, and they parted. Dealing with Lali had taught them all much of the human heart that they had never known before, and the result thereof was wisdom.

They talked casually enough for the rest of the ride, and before they parted at the door Frank received his commission for Regent Street, and accepted it with delight, as a schoolboy might a gift. He was absurdly grateful for any favours from her, any sign of her companionship. They met at luncheon; then, because Lali had to keep an engagement in Eaton Square, they parted again, and Frank and Richard took a walk, after a long hour with the child, who still so hungered for his sword that Frank disobeyed orders, and dragged Richard off to Oxford Street to get one. He was reduced to a beatific attitude of submission, for he knew that he had few odds with him now, and that he must live by virtue of new virtues. He was no longer proud of himself in any way, and he knew that no one else was, or rather he felt so, and that was just the same.

He talked of the boy, he talked of his wife, he laid plans, he tore them down, he built them up again, he asked advice, he did not wait to hear it, but rambled

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on, excited, eager. Truth is, there had suddenly been lifted from his mind the dread and shadow of four years. Wherever he had gone, whatever he had been or done, that dread shadow had followed him, and now to know that instead of having to endure a hell he had to win a heaven, and to feel as if his brain had been opened and a mass of vapours and naughty little mannikins of remorse had been let out, was a trifle intoxicating even to a man of his usual vigour and early acquaintance with exciting things.

"Dick, Dick!" he said enthusiastically, "you've been royal. You always were better than any chap I ever knew. You're always doing for others. Hang it, Dick, where does your fun come in? Nobody seems ever to do anything for you."

Richard gave his arm a squeeze. "Never mind about me, boy. I've had all the fun I want, and all I'm likely to get, and so long as you're all willing to have me around, I'm satisfied. There's always a lot to do among the people in the village, one way and another, and I've a heap of reading on, and what more does a fellow want?"

"You didn't always feel that way, Dick?"

"No. You see, at different times in life you want different kinds of pleasures. I've had a good many kinds, and the present kind is about as satisfactory as any."

"But, Dick, you ought to get married. You've got coin, you've got sense, you're a bit distinguished-looking, and I'll back your heart against a thousand bishops. You've never been in danger of making a fool of yourself as I have. Why didn't you—why don't you—get married?"

Richard patted his brother's shoulder.

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"Married, boy? Married? I've got too much o my hands. I've got to bring you up yet. And whe that's done I shall have to write a book called 'Hov to bring up a Parent.' Then I've got to help bring your boy up, as I've done these last three years and more. I've got to think of that boy for a long while yet, for I know him better than you do, and I shall need some of my coin to carry out my plans."

"God bless you, Dick! Bring me up as you will, only bring *her* along too; and as for the boy, you're far more his father than I am. And mother says that it's you that's given me the wife I've got now—so what can I say?—what can I say?"

It was the middle of the Green Park, and Richard turned and clasped Frank by both shoulders.

"Say? Say that you'll stand by the thing you swore to one mad day in the West as well as any man that ever lived—'to have and to hold, to love and to cherish from this day forth till death us do part, Amen.'"

Richard's voice was low and full of a strange, searching something.

Frank, wondering at this great affection and fondness of his brother, looked him in the eyes warmly, solemnly, and replied: "For richer or for poorer, for better or for worse, in sickness and in health—so help me God, and her kindness and forgiveness!"

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CHAPTER XII

"THE CHASE OF THE YELLOW SWAN"

FRANK and Lali did not meet until dinner was announced. The conversation at dinner was mainly upon the return to Greyhope, which was fixed for the following morning, and it was deftly kept gay and superficial by Marion and Richard and Captain Vidall, until General Armour became reminiscent, and held the interest of the table through a dozen little incidents of camp and barrack life until the ladies rose. There had been an engagement for late in the evening, but it had been given up because of Frank's home-coming, and there was to be a family gathering merely—for Captain Vidall was now as much one of the family as Frank or Richard, by virtue of his approaching marriage with Marion. The men left alone, General Armour questioned Frank freely about life in the Hudson's Bay country, and the conversation ran on idly till it was time to join the ladies.

When they reached the drawing-room, Marion was seated at the piano, playing a rhapsody of Raff's, and Mrs. Armour and Lali were seated side by side. Frank thrilled at seeing his wife's hand in his mother's. Marion nodded over the piano at the men, and presently played a snatch of *Carmen*, then wandered off into the barbaric strength of *Tannhauser*, and as suddenly again into the ballet music of *Faust*.

"Why so wilful, my girl?" asked her father, who

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had a keen taste for music. "Why this tangle? Let us have something definite."

Marion sprang up from the piano. "I can't. I'm not definite myself to-night." Then, turning to Lali: "Lali dear, sing something—do! Sing my favourite, 'The Chase of the Yellow Swan.'"

This was a song which in the later days at Greyhope, Lali had sung for Marion, first in her own language, with the few notes of an Indian chant, and afterwards, by the help of the celebrated musician who had taught her both music and singing, both of which she had learned but slowly, it was translated and set to music. Lali looked Marion steadily in the eyes for a moment and then rose. It cost her something to do this thing, for while she had often talked much and long with Richard about that old life, it now seemed as if she were to sing it to one who would not quite understand why she should sing it at all, or what was her real attitude towards her past—that she looked upon it from the infinite distance of affectionate pity, knowledge, and indescribable change, and yet loved the inspiring atmosphere and mystery of that lonely North, which once in the veins never leaves it—never. Would *he* understand that she was feeling, not the common detail of the lodge and the camp-fire and the Company's post, but the deep spirit of Nature, filtering through the senses in a thousand ways—the wild ducks' flight, the sweet smell of the balsam, the exquisite gallop of the deer, the powder of the frost, the sun and snow and blue plains of water, the thrilling eternity of plain and the splendid steps of the hills, which led away by stair and entresol to the Kimash Hills, the Hills of the Mighty Men?

She did not know what he would think, and again on

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second thought she determined to make him, by this song, contrast her as she was when he married her, and now—how she herself could look upon that past unabashed, speak of it without blushing, sing of it with pride, having reached a point where she could look down and say: "This was the way by which I came."

She rose, and was accompanied to the piano by General Armour, Frank admiring her soft, springing steps, her figure so girlish and lissom. She paused for a little before she began. Her eyes showed for a moment over the piano, deep, burning, inlooking; then they veiled; her fingers touched the keys, wandered over them in a few strange, soft chords, paused, wandered again, more firmly and very intimately, and then she sang. Her voice was a good contralto, well balanced, true, of no great range, but within its compass melodious, and having some inexpressible charm of temperament. Frank did not need to strain his ears to hear the words; every one came clear, searching, delicately valued:

"In the flash of the singing dawn,
At the door of the Great One,
The joy of his lodge knelt down,
Knelt down, and her hair in the sun
Shone like showering dust,
And her eyes were as eyes of the fawn.
And she cried to her lord,
'O my lord, O my life,
From the desert I come;
From the hills of the Dawn.'
And he lifted the curtain and said,
'Hast thou seen It, the Yellow Swan?'

"And she lifted her head, and her eyes
Were as lights in the dark,
And her hands folded slow on her breast,
And her face was as one who has seen

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The gods and the place where they dwell;
And she said: 'Is it meet that I kneel,
That I kneel as I speak to my lord?'
And he answered her: 'Nay, but to stand,
And to sit by my side;
But speak, thou hast followed the trail,
Hast thou found It, the Yellow Swan?'

"And she stood as a queen, and her voice
Was as one who hath seen the Hills,
The Hills of the Mighty Men,
And hath heard them cry in the night,
Hath heard them call in the dawn,
Hath seen It, the Yellow Swan.
And she said: 'It is not for my lord;'
And she murmured, 'I cannot tell,
But my lord must go as I went,
And my lord must come as I came,
And my lord shall be wise.'

"And he cried in his wrath,
'What is thine, it is mine,
And thine eyes are my eyes—
Thou shalt speak of the Yellow Swan!'
But she answered him: 'Nay, though I die.
I have lain in the nest of the Swan,
I have heard, I have known;
When thine eyes too have seen,
When thine ears too have heard,
Thou shalt do with me then as thou wilt!'

"And he lifted his hand to strike,
And he straightened his spear to slay,
But a great light struck on his eyes,
And he heard the rushing of wings,
And his long spear fell from his hand,
And a terrible stillness came.
And when the spell passed from his eyes,
He stood in his doorway alone,
And gone was the queen of his soul,
And gone was the Yellow Swan."

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Frank Armour listened as in a dream. The song had the wild swing of savage life, the deep sweetness of a monotone, but it had also the fine intelligence, the subtle allusiveness of romance. He could read between the lines. The allegory touched him where his nerves were sensitive. Where she had gone he could not go until his eyes had seen and known what hers had seen and known; he could not grasp his happiness all in a moment; she was no longer at his feet, but equal with him, and wiser than he. She had not meant the song to be allusive when she began, but to speak to him through it by singing the heathen song as his own sister might sing it. As the song went on, however, she felt the inherent suggestion in it, so that when she had finished it required all her strength to get up calmly, come among them again, and listen to their praises and thanks. She had no particular wish to be alone with Frank just yet, but the others soon arranged themselves so that the husband and wife were left in a cosey corner of the room.

Lali's heart fluttered a little at first, for the day had been trying, and she was not as strong as she could wish. Admirably as she had gone through the season, it had worn on her, and her constitution had become sensitive and delicate, while yet strong. The life had almost refined her too much. Always on the watch that she should do exactly as Marion or Mrs. Armour, always so sensitive as to what was required of her, always preparing for this very time, now that it had come, and her heart and mind were strong, her body seemed to weaken. Once or twice during the day she had felt a little faint, but it had passed off, and she had scolded herself. She did not wish a serious talk with her husband to-night, but she saw now that it was inevitable.

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He said to her as he sat down beside her: "You sing very well indeed. The song is full of meaning, and you bring it all out."

"I am glad you like it," she responded conventionally. "Of course it's an unusual song for an English drawing-room."

"As you sing it, it would be beautiful and acceptable anywhere, Lali."

"Thank you again," she answered, closing and unclosing her fan, her eyes wandering to where Mrs. Armour was. She wished she could escape, for she did not feel like talking, and yet though the man was her husband she could not say that she was too tired to talk; she must be polite. Then, with a little dainty malice: "It is more interesting, though, in the vernacular—and costume!"

"Not unless you sang it so," he answered gallantly, and with a kind of earnestness.

"You have not forgotten the way of London men," she rejoined.

"Perhaps that is well, for I do not know the way of women," he said, with a faint bitterness. "Yet, I don't speak unadvisedly in this,"—here he meant to be a little bold and bring the talk to the past,—"for I heard you sing that song once before."

She turned on him half puzzled, a little nervous. "Where did you hear me sing it?"

He had made up his mind, wisely enough, to speak with much openness and some tact also, if possible.

"It was on the Glow Worm River at the Clip Claw Hills. I came into your father's camp one evening in the autumn, hungry and tired and knocked about. I was given the next tent to yours. It was night, and just before I turned in I heard your voice singing. I

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couldn't understand much of the language, but I had the sense of it, and I know it when I hear it again."

"Yes, I remember singing it that night," she said. "Next day was the Feast of the Yellow Swan."

Her eyes presently became dreamy, and her face took on a distant, rapt look. She sat looking straight before her for a moment.

He did not speak, for he interpreted the look aright, and he was going to be patient, to wait.

"Tell me of my father," she said. "You have been kind to him?"

He winced a little. "When I left Fort Charles he was very well," he said, "and he asked me to tell you to come some day. He also has sent you a half-dozen silver-fox skins, a sash, and moccasins made by his own hands. The things are not yet unpacked."

Moccasins? She remembered when last she had moccasins on her feet—the day she rode the horse at the quick-set hedge, and nearly lost her life. How very distant that all was, and yet how near too! Suddenly she remembered also why she took that mad ride, and her heart hardened a little.

"You have been kind to my father since I left?" she asked.

He met her eyes steadily. "No, not always; not more than I have been kind to you. But at the last, yes." Suddenly his voice became intensely direct and honest. "Lali," he continued, "there is much that I want to say to you." She waved her hand in a wearied fashion. "I want to tell you that I would do the hardest penance if I could wipe out these last four years."

"Penance?" she said dreamily—"penance? What guarantee of happiness would that be? One would not wish another to do penance if—" She paused.

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"I understand," he said—"if one cared—if one loved. Yes, I understand. But that does not alter the force or meaning of the wish. I swear to you that I repent with all my heart—the first wrong to you, the long absence—the neglect—everything."

She turned slowly to him. "Everything—Everything?" she repeated after him. "Do you understand what that means? Do you know a woman's heart? No. Do you know what a shameful neglect is at the most pitiful time in your life? No. How can a man know! He has a thousand things—the woman has nothing, nothing at all except the refuge of home, that for which she gave up everything!"

Presently she broke off, and something sprang up and caught her in the throat. Years of indignation were at work in her. "I have had a home," she said, in a low, thrilling voice—"a good home; but what did that cost you? Not one honest sentiment of pity, kindness, or solicitude. You clothed me, fed me, abandoned me, as—how can one say it? Do I not know, if coming back you had found me as you expected to find me, what the result would have been? Do I not know? You would have endured me if I did not thrust myself upon you, for you have after all a sense of legal duty, a kind of stubborn honour. But you would have made my life such that some day one or both of us would have died suddenly. For"—she looked him with a hot clearness in the eyes—"for there is just so much that a woman can bear. I wish this talk had not come now, but, since it has come, it is better to speak plainly. You see, you misunderstand. A heathen has a heart as another—has a life to be spoiled or made happy as another. Had there been one honest passion in your treatment of me—in your marrying me—there would be something on

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which to base mutual respect, which is more or less necessary when one is expected to love. But—but I will not speak more of it, for it chokes me, the insult to me, not as I was, but as I am. Then it would probably have driven me mad, if I had known; now it eats into my life like rust."

He made a motion as if to take her hands, but lifting them away quietly she said: "You forget that there are others present, as well as the fact that we can talk better without demonstration."

He was about to speak, but she stopped him. "No, wait," she said; "for I want to say a little more. I was only an Indian girl, but you must remember that I had also in my veins good white blood, Scotch blood. Perhaps it was that which drew me to you then—for Lali the Indian girl loved you. Life had been to me pleasant enough—without care, without misery, open, strong and free; our people were not as those others which had learned the white man's vices. We loved the hunt, the camp-fires, the sacred feasts, the legends of the Mighty Men; and the earth was a good friend, whom we knew as the child knows its mother."

She paused. Something seemed to arrest her attention. Frank followed her eyes. She was watching Captain Vidall and Marion. He guessed what she was thinking—how different her own wooing had been from theirs, how concerning her courtship she had not one sweet memory—the thing that keeps alive more love and loyalty in this world than anything else. Presently General Armour joined them, and Frank's opportunity was over for the present.

Captain Vidall and Marion were engaged in a very earnest conversation, though it might not appear so to observers.

"Come, now, Marion," he said protestingly, "don't

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be impossible. Please give the day a name. Don't you think we've waited about long enough?"

"There was a man in the Bible who served seven years."

"I've served over three in India since I met you at the well, and that counts double. Why so particular to a day? It's a bit Jewish. Anyhow, that seven years was rough on Rachel."

"How, Hume? Because she got *passée?*"

"Well, that counted; but do you suppose that Jew was going to put in those seven years without interest? Don't you believe it. Rachel paid capital and interest back, or Jacob was no Jew. Tell me, Marion, when shall it be?"

"Hume, for a man who has trifled away years in India, you are strangely impatient."

"Mrs. Lambert says that I have the sweetest disposition."

"My *dear* sir!"

"Don't look at me like that at this distance, or I shall have to wear goggles, as the man did who went courting the Sun."

"How supremely ridiculous you are! And I thought you such a sensible, serious man."

"Mrs. Lambert put that in your head. We used to meet at the annual dinners of the Bible Society."

"Why do you tell me such stuff?"

"It's a fact. Her father and my aunt were in that swim, and we were sympathisers."

"Mercenary people!"

"It worked very well in her case; not so well in mine. But we conceived a profound respect for each other then. But tell me, Marion, when is it to be? Why put off the inevitable?"

"It isn't inevitable—and I'm only twenty-three."

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"Only twenty-three,
And as good fish in the sea"—

he responded, laughing. "Yes, but you've set the precedent for a courtship of four years and a bit, and what man could face it?"

"You did."

"Yes, but I wasn't advertised of the fact beforehand. Suppose I had seen the notice at the start: 'This mortgage cannot be raised inside of four years—and a bit!' There's a limit to human endurance."

"Why shouldn't I hold to the number, but alter the years to days?"

"You wouldn't dare. A woman must live up to her reputation."

"Indeed? What an ambition!"

"And a man to his manners."

"An unknown quantity."

"And a lover to his promises."

"A book of jokes." Marion had developed a taste for satire.

"Which reminds me of Lady Halwood and Mrs. Lambert. Lady Halwood was more impertinent than usual the other day at the Sinclairs' show, and had a little fling at Mrs. Lambert. The talk turned on gowns. Lady Halwood was much interested at once. She has a weakness that way. 'Why,' said she, 'I like these fashions this year, but I'm not sure that they suit me. They're the same as when the Queen came to the throne.' 'Well,' said Mrs. Lambert sweetly, 'if they suited you then—' There was an audible titter, and Mrs. Lambert had an enemy for life."

"I don't see the point of your story in this connection."

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"No? Well, it was merely to suggest that if you had to live up to this scheme of four-years' probation, other people besides lovers would make up books of jokes, and—"

"That's like a man—to threaten."

"Yes, I threaten—on my knees."

"Hume, how long do you think Frank will have to wait?"

They were sitting where they had a good view of the husband and wife, and Vidall, after a moment, said:

"I don't know. She has waited four years, too; now it looks as if, like Jacob, she was going to gather in her shekels of interest compounded."

"It isn't going to be a bit pleasant to watch."

"But you won't be here to see."

Marion ignored the suggestion. "She seems to have hardened since he came yesterday. I hardly know her; and yet she looks awfully worn to-night, don't you think?"

"Yes, as if she had to keep a hand on herself. But it'll come out all right in the end, you'll see."

"Yes, of course; but she might be sensible and fall in love with Frank at once. That's what she did when—"

"When she didn't know man."

"Yes, but where would you all be if we women acted on what we know of you?"

"On our knees chiefly, as I am. Remember this, Marion, that half a sinner is better than no man."

"You mean that no man is better than half a saint?"

"How you must admire me!"

"Why?"

"As you are about to name the day, I assume that I'm a whole saint in your eyes."

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"St. Augustine!"

"Who was he?"

"A man that reformed."

"Before or after marriage?"

"Before, I suppose."

"I don't think he died happy."

"Why not?"

"I've a faint recollection that he was boiled."

"Don't be horrid. What has that to do with it?"

"Nothing, perhaps. But he probably broke out again after marriage, and sank at last into that caldron. That's what it means by being—steeped in crime."

"How utterly nonsensical you are!"

"I feel light-headed. You've been at sea, on a yacht becalmed, haven't you? when along comes a ground-swell, and as you rock in the sun there comes trouble, and your head goes round like a top? Now, that's my case. I've been becalmed four years, and while I pray for a little wind to take me—home, you rock me in the trough of uncertainty. Suspense is very gall and wormwood. You know what the jailer said to the criminal who was hanging on a reprieve: 'Rope deferred maketh the heart sick.' Marion, give me the hour, or give me the rope."

"The rope enough to hang yourself?"

She suddenly reached up and pulled a hair from her head. She laid it in his hand—a long brown silken thread. "Hume," she said airily yet gently, "there is the rope. Can you love me for a month of Sundays?"

"Yes, for ever and a day!"

"I will cancel the day, and take your bond for the rest. I will be generous. I will marry you in two months—and a day."

"My dearest girl!"—he drew her hand into both of

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his—"I can't have you more generous than myself, I'll throw off the month." But his eyes were shining very seriously, though his mouth smiled.

"Two months and a day," she repeated.

"We must all bundle off to Greyhope to-morrow," came General Armour's voice across the room. "Down comes the baby, cradle and all."

Lali rose. "I am very tired," she said; "I think I will say good-night."

"I'll go and see the boy with you," Frank said, rising also.

Lali turned towards Marion. Marion's face was flushed, and had a sweet, happy confusion. With a low, trembling good-night to Captain Vidall, a hurried kiss on her mother's cheek, and a tip-toed caress on her father's head, she ran and linked her arm in Lali's, and together they proceeded to the child's room. Richard was there when they arrived, mending a broken toy. Two hours later, the brothers parted at Frank's door.

"Reaping the whirlwind, Dick?" Frank said, dropping his hand on his brother's arm.

Richard pointed to the child's room.

"Nonsense! Do you want all the world at once? You are reaping the forgiveness of your sins."

Somehow Richard's voice was a little stern.

"I was thinking of my devilry, Dick. That's the whirlwind—here!" His hand dropped on his breast.

"That's where it ought to be. Good-night."

"Good-night."

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CHAPTER XIII

A LIVING POEM

PART of Frank's most trying interview, next to the meeting with his wife, was that with Mackenzie, who had been his special commissioner in the movement of his masquerade. Mackenzie also had learned a great deal since she had brought Lali—home. She, like others, had come to care truly for the sweet barbarian, and served her with a grim kind of reverence. Just in proportion as this had increased, her respect for Frank had decreased. No man can keep a front of dignity in the face of an unbecoming action. However, Mackenzie had her moment, and when it was over, the new life began at no general disadvantage to Frank. To all save the immediate family Frank and Lali were a companionable husband and wife. She rode with him, occasionally walked with him, now and again sang to him, and they appeared in the streets of St. Albans and at the Abbey together, and oftener still in the village church near, where the Armours of many generations were proclaimed of much account in the solid virtues of tomb and tablet.

The day had gone by when Lali attracted any especial notice among the villagers, and she enjoyed the quiet beauty and earnestness of the service. But she received a shock one Sunday. She had been nervous all the week, she could not tell why, and others remarked how her face had taken on a new sensitiveness, a deli-

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cate anxiety, and that her strength was not what it had been. As, for instance, after riding she required to rest, a thing before unknown, and she often lay down for an hour before dinner. Then, too, at table once she grew suddenly pale and swayed against Edward Lambert, who was sitting next to her. She would not, however, leave the table, but sat the dinner out, to Frank's apprehension. He was devoted, but it was clear to Marion and her mother at least that his attentions were trying to her. They seemed to put her under an obligation which to meet was a trial. There is nothing more wearing to a woman than affectionate attentions from a man who has claims upon her, but whom she does not love. These same attentions from one who has no claims give her a thrill of pleasure. It is useless to ask for justice in such a matter. These things are governed by no law; and rightly so, else the world would be in good time a loveless multitude, held together only by the hungering ties of parent and child.

But this Sunday wherein Lali received a shock. She did not know that the banns for Marion's and Captain Vidall's marriage were to be announced, and at the time her thoughts were far away. She was recalled to herself by the clergyman's voice pronouncing their names, and saying: "*If any of you do know cause or just impediment why these two people should not be joined together in the bonds of holy matrimony, ye are to declare it.*" All at once there came back to her her own marriage when the Protestant missionary, in his nasal monotone, mumbled these very words, not as if he expected that any human being would, or could, offer objection.

She almost sprang from her seat now. Her nerves all at once came to such a tension that she could have

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cried out. Why had there been no one there at her marriage to say: "I forbid it"? How shameful it had all been! And the first kiss her husband had given her had the flavour of brandy! If she could but turn back the hands upon the clock of Time! Under the influence of the music and the excited condition of her nerves, the event became magnified, distorted; it burned into her brain. It was not made less poignant by the sermon from the text: "*Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.*" When the words were first announced in the original, it sounded like her own language, save that it was softer, and her heart throbbed fast. Then came the interpretation: "*Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting.*"

Then suddenly swept over her a new feeling, one she had never felt before. Up to this point a determination to justify her child, to reverse the verdict of the world, to turn her husband's sin upon himself, had made her defiant, even bitter; in all things eager to live up to her new life, to the standard that Richard had by manner and suggestion, rather than by words, laid down for her. But now there came in upon her a flood of despair. At best she was only of this race through one-third of her parentage, and education and refinement and all things could do no more than make her possible. There must always be in the record: "She was of a strange people. She was born in a wigwam." She did not know that failing health was really the cause of this lapse of self-confidence, this growing self-depreciation, this languor for which she could not account. She found that she could not toss the child and frolic with it as she had done; she was conscious that within a month there had stolen upon her the desire to be much alone, to avoid noises and bustle—it irritated her. She found herself

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thinking more and more of her father, her father to whom she had never written one line since she had left the North. She had had good reasons for not writing—writing could do no good whatever, particularly to a man who could not read, and who would not have understood her new life if he had read. Yet now she seemed not to know why she had not written, and to blame herself for neglect and forgetfulness. It weighed on her. Why had she ever been taken from the place of tamarack-trees and the sweeping prairie grass? No, no, she was not, after all, fit for this life. She had been mistaken, and Richard had been mistaken—Richard, who was so wise. The London season? Ah! that was because people had found a novelty, and herself of better manners than had been expected.

The house was now full of preparations for the wedding. It stared her in the face every day, almost every hour. Dressmakers, milliners, tailors, and all those other necessary people. Did the others think what all this meant to her? It was impossible that they should. When Marion came back from town at night and told of her trials among the dressmakers, when she asked the general opinion and sometimes individual judgment, she could not know that it was at the expense of Lali's nerves.

Lali, when she married, had changed her moccasins, combed her hair, and put on a fine red belt, and that was all. She was not envious now, not at all. But somehow it all was a deadly kind of evidence against herself and her marriage. Her reproach was public, the world knew it, and no woman can forgive a public shame, even was it brought about by a man she loved, or loves. Her chiefest property in life is her self-esteem and her name before the world. Rob her of these, and her heaven

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has fallen, and if a man has shifted the foundations of her peace, there is no forgiveness for him till her Paradise has been reconquered. So busy were all the others that they did not see how her strength was failing. There were three weeks between the day the banns were announced and the day of the wedding, which was to be in the village church, not in town; for, as Marion said, she had seen too many marriages for one day's triumph and criticism; she wanted hers where there would be neither triumph nor criticism, but among people who had known her from her childhood up. A happy romance had raised Marion's point of view.

Meanwhile Frank was winning the confidence of his own child, who, however, ranked Richard higher always, and became to a degree his father's tyrant. But Frank's nature was undergoing a change. His point of view also had enlarged. The suffering, bitterness, and humiliation of his life in the North had done him good. He was being disciplined to take his position as a husband and father, but he sometimes grew heavy-hearted when he saw how his attentions oppressed his wife, and had it not been for Richard he might probably have brought on disaster, for the position was trying to all concerned. A few days before the wedding Edward Lambert and his wife arrived, and he, Captain Vidall, and Frank Armour took rides and walks together, or set the world right in the billiard-room. Richard seldom joined them, though their efforts to induce him to do so were many. He had his pensioners, his books, his pipe, and "the boy," and he had returned in all respects, in so far as could be seen, to his old life, save for the new and larger interest of his nephew.

One evening the three men with General Armour were all gathered in the billiard-room. Conversation

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had been general and without particular force, as it always is when merely civic or political matters are under view. But some one gave a social twist to the talk, and presently they were launched upon that sea where every man provides his own chart, or he is a very worm and no man. Each man had been differently trained, each viewed life from a different stand-point, and yet each had been brought up in the same social atmosphere, in the same social sets, had imbibed the same traditions, been moved generally by the same public considerations.

"But there's little to be said for a man who doesn't, outwardly at least, live up to the social necessity," said Lambert.

"And keep the Ten Commandments in the vulgar tongue," rejoined Vidall.

"I've lived seventy-odd years, and I've knocked about a good deal in my time," said the general, "but I've never found that you could make a breach of social necessity, as you call it, without paying for it one way or another. The trouble with us when we're young is that we want to get more out of life than there really is in it. There is not much in it, after all. You can stand just so much fighting, just so much work, just so much emotion—and you can stand less emotion than anything else. I'm sure more men and women break up from a hydrostatic pressure of emotion than from anything else. Upon my soul, that's so."

"You are right, General," said Lambert. "The steady way is the best way. The world is a passable place, if a fellow has a decent income by inheritance, or can earn a big one, but to be really contented to earn money it must be a big one, otherwise he is far better pleased to take the small inherited income. It has a

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lot of dignity, which the other can only bring when it is large."

"That's only true in this country; it's not true in America," said Frank, "for there the man who doesn't earn money is looked upon as a muff, and is treated as such. A small inherited income is thought to be a trifle enervating. But there is a country of emotions, if you like. The American heart is worn upon the American sleeve, and the American mind is the most active thing in this world. That's why they grow old so young."

"I met a woman a year or so ago at dinner," said Vidall, "who looked forty. She looked it, and she acted it. She was younger than any woman present, but she seemed older. There was a kind of hopeless languor about her which struck me as pathetic. Yet she had been beautiful, and might even have been so when I saw her, if it hadn't been for that look. It was the look of a person who had no interest in things. And the person who has no interest in things is the person who once had a great deal of interest in things, who had too passionate an interest. The revulsion is always terrible. Too much romance is deadly. It is as false a stimulant as opium or alcohol, and leaves a corresponding mark. Well, I heard her history. She was married at fifteen—ran away to be married; and in spite of the fact that a railway accident nearly took her husband from her on the night of her marriage—one would have thought that would make a strong bond—she was soon alive to the attentions that are given a pretty and—considerate woman. At a ball at Naples, her husband, having in vain tried to induce her to go home, picked her up under his arm and carried her out of the ballroom. Then came a couple of years of opium-eating, fierce social excitement, divorce, new marriage, and so on, until her hus-

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band agreeably decided to live in Nice, while she lived somewhere else. Four days after I had met her at the dinner I saw her again. I could scarcely believe my eyes. The woman had changed completely. She was young again—twenty-five, in face and carriage, in the eye and hand, in step and voice."

"Who was the man?" suggested Frank Armour.

"A man about her own age, or a little more, but who was an infant beside her in knowledge of the world."

"She was in love with the fellow? It was a *grande passion?*" asked Lambert.

"In love with him? No, not at all. It was a momentary revival of an old—possibility."

"You mean that such women never really love?"

"Perhaps once, Frank, but only after a fashion. The rest was mere imitation of their first impulses."

"And this woman?"

"Well, the end came sooner than I expected. I tell you I was shocked at the look in her face when I saw it again. That light had flickered out; the sensitive alertness of hand, eye, voice, and carriage had died away; lines had settled in the face, and the face itself had gone cold, with that hard, cold passiveness which comes from exhausted emotions and a closed heart. The jewels she wore might have been put upon a statue with equal effect."

"It seems to me that we might pitch into men in these things and not make women the dreadful examples," said a voice from the corner. It was the voice of Richard, who had but just entered.

"My dear Dick," said his father, "men don't make such frightful examples, because these things mean le to men than they do to women. Romance is an incide to a man; he can even come through an *affaire* with

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[illegible] while he remained in a fork of the Far Off River. It was like some ancient blessing: that we should always have a safe tent and no sorrow as we travelled; that we should always have a cache for our food, and [illegible] that we should never find a tree that would not give sap, nor a field that would not grow grain; that our bees should not freeze in winter, and that the honey should be thick, and the comb break like snow in the teeth; that we keep hearts like the morning, and that we come slow to the Four Corners where man says Good-night."

Each of the other men present wondered at that instant if Frank Armour would, or could, have said this with the same feelings two months before. He seemed almost transformed.

"It reminds me," said the general, "of an inscription from an Egyptian monument which an officer of the First put into English verse for me years ago:

> "Fair be the garden where their loves shall dwell,
> Safe be the highway where their feet may go,
> Rich be the fields wherein their hands may toil,
> The fountains many where their good wines flow.
> Full be their harvest-bins with corn and oil,
> To sorrow may their humour be a foil;
> Quick be their hearts all wise delights to know,
> Tardy their footsteps to the gate Farewell."

There was a moment's silence after he had finished, and then there was noise without, a sound of pattering feet; the door flew open, and in ran a little figure in white—young Richard in his bed-gown, who had broken away from his nurse, and had made his way to the billiard-room, where he knew his uncle had gone.

The child's face was flashing with mischief and adven-

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ture. He ran in among the group, and stretched out his hands with a little fighting air. His uncle Richard made a step towards him, but he ran back; his father made as if to take him in his arms, but he evaded him. Presently the door opened, the nurse entered, the child sprang from among the group, and ran with a laughing defiance to the farthest end of the room, and, leaning his chin on the billiard-table, flashed a look of defiant humour at his pursuer. Presently the door opened again, and the figure of the mother appeared. All at once the child's face altered; he stood perfectly still, and waited for his mother to come to him. Lali had not spoken, and she did not speak until, lifting the child, she came the length of the billiard-table and faced them.

"I beg your pardon," she said, "for intruding; but Richard has led us a dance, and I suppose the mother may go where her child goes."

"The mother and the child are always welcome wherever they go," said General Armour quietly.

All the men had risen to their feet, and they made a kind of semicircle before her. The white-robed child had clasped its arms about her neck, and nestled its face against hers, as if, with perfect satisfaction, it had got to the end of its adventure; but the look of humour was still in the eyes as they ran from Richard to his father and back again.

Frank Armour stepped forwards and took the child's hand, as it rested on the mother's shoulder. Lali's face underwent a slight change as her husband's fingers touched her neck.

"I must go," she said. "I hope I have not broken up a serious conversation—or were you not so serious after all?" she said, glancing archly at General Armour.

"We were talking of women," said Lambert.

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"The subject is wide," replied Lali, "and the speakers many. One would think some wisdom might be got in such a case."

"Believe me, we were not trying to understand the subject," said Captain Vidall; "the most that a mere man can do is to appreciate it."

"There are some things that are hidden from the struggling mind of man, and are revealed unto babes and the mothers of babes," said General Armour gravely, as, reaching out his hands, he took the child from the mother's arms, kissed it full upon the lips, and added: "Men do not understand women, because men's minds have not been trained in the same school. When once a man has mastered the very alphabet of motherhood, then he shall have mastered the mind of woman; but I, at least, refuse to say that I do not understand, from the stand-point of modern cynicism."

"Ah, General, General!" said Lambert, "we have lost the chivalric way of saying things, which belongs to your generation."

By this time the wife had reached the door. She turned and held out her arms for the child. General Armour came and placed the boy where he had found it, and, with eyes suddenly filling, laid both his hands upon Lali's and they clasped the child, and said: "It is worth while to have lived so long and to have seen so much." Her eyes met his in a wistful, anxious expression, shifted to those of her husband, dropped to the cheeks of the child, and with the whispered word, which no one, not even the general, heard, she passed from the room, the nurse following her.

Perhaps some of the most striking contrasts are achieved in the least melodramatic way. The sudden incursion of the child and its mother into the group, the

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effect of their presence, and their soft departure, leaving behind them, as it were, a trail of light, changed the whole atmosphere of the room, as though some new life had been breathed into it, charged each mind with new sensations, and gave each figure new attitude. Not a man present but had had his full swing with the world, none worse than most men, none better than most, save that each had latent in him a good sense of honour concerning all civic and domestic virtues. They were not men of sentimentality; they were not accustomed to exposing their hearts upon their sleeve, but each, as the door closed, recognised that something for one instant had come in among them, had made their past conversation to appear meagre, crude, and lacking in both height and depth. Somehow, they seemed to feel, although no words expressed the thought, that for an instant they were in the presence of a wisdom greater than any wisdom of a man's smoking-room.

"It is wonderful, wonderful," said the general slowly, and no man asked him why he said it, or what was wonderful. But Richard, sitting apart, watched Frank's face acutely, himself wondering when the hour would come that the wife would forgive her husband, and this situation so fraught with danger would be relieved.

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CHAPTER XIV

ON THE EDGE OF A FUTURE

At last the day of the wedding came, a beautiful September day, which may be more beautiful in uncertain England than anywhere else. Lali had been strangely quiet all the day before, and she had also seemed strangely delicate. Perhaps, or perhaps not, she felt the crisis was approaching. It is probable that when the mind has been strained for a long time, and the heart and body suffered much, one sees a calamity vaguely, and cannot define it; appreciates it, and does not know it. She came to Marion's room about a half-hour before they were to start for the church. Marion was already dressed and ready, save for the few final touches, which, though they have been given a dozen times, must still again be given just before the bride starts for the church. Such is the anxious mind of women on these occasions. The two stood and looked at each other a moment, each wondering what were the thoughts of the other. Lali was struck by that high, proud look over which lay a glamour of infinite satisfaction, of sweetness, which comes to every good woman's face when she goes to the altar in a marriage which is not contingent on the rise or fall in stocks, or a satisfactory settlement. Marion, looking, saw, as if it had been revealed to her all at once, the intense and miraculous change which had come over the young wife, even within the past two months. Indeed, she had

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changed as much within that time as within all the previous four years—that is, she had been brought to a certain point in her education and experience, where without a newer and deeper influence she could go no further. That newer and deeper influence had come, and the result thereof was a woman standing upon the verge of the real tragedy to her life, which was not in having married the man, but in facing that marriage with her new intelligence and a transformed soul. Men can face that sort of thing with a kind of philosophy, not because men are better or wiser, but because it really means less to them. They have resources of life they can bury themselves in their ambitions good or bad, but a woman can only bury herself in her affections, unless her heart has been closed; and in that case she herself has lost much of what made her adorable. And while she may go on with the closed heart and become a saint, even sainthip is hardly sufficient to compensate any man or woman for a half-lived life. The only thing worth doing in this world is to live life according to one's convictions—and one's heart. He or she who sells that fine independence for a mess of pottage, no matter if the mess be spiced, sells, as the Master said, the immortal part of him.

And so Lali, just here on the edge of Marion's future, looking into that mirror, was catching the reflection of her own life. When two women come so near that, like the lovers in the *Tempest*, they have changed eyes, in so far as to read each other's hearts,—even unconsciously, which is much where two women are concerned,—there is only one resource, and that is to fall [illegible]

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Marion might, therefore, be pardoned if she had her tears in her throat and not in her eyes, and Lali, if they arose for a moment no higher than her heart. But they did fall into each other's arms despite veils and orange blossoms, and somehow Marion had the feeling for Lali that she had on that first day at Greyhope, four years ago, when standing on the bridge, the girl looked down into the water, tears dropping on her hands, and Marion said to her: "Poor girl! poor girl!" The situations were the same, because Lali had come to a new phase of her life, and what that phase would be who could tell—happiness or despair?

The usual person might think that Lali was placing herself and her wifely affection at a rather high price, but then it is about the only thing that a woman can place high, even though she be one-third a white woman and two-thirds an Indian. Here was a beautiful woman, who had run the gamut of a London season, who had played a pretty social part, admirably trained therefor by one of the best and most cultured families of England. Besides, why should any woman sell her affections even to her husband, bargain away her love, the one thing that sanctifies "what God hath joined let no man put asunder"? Lali was primitive, she was unlike so many in a trivial world, but she was right. She might suffer, she might die, but, after all, there are many things worse than that. Man is born in a day, and he dies in a day, and the thing is easily over; but to have a sick heart for three-fourths of one's lifetime is simply to have death renewed every morning; and life at that price is not worth living. In this sensitive age we are desperately anxious to save life, as if it was the really great thing in the world; but in the good, strong times of the earth—and in these times, indeed, when

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necessity knows its hour—men held their lives as lightly as a bird upon the housetop which any chance stone might drop.

It is possible that at this moment the two women understood each other better than they had ever done, and respected each other more. Lali, recovering herself, spoke a few soft words of congratulation, and then appeared to busy herself in putting little touches to Marion's dress, that soft persuasion of fingers which does so much to coax mere cloth into a sort of living harmony with the body.

They had no more words of confidence, but in the porch of the church, Marion, as she passed Lali, caught the slender fingers in her own and pressed them tenderly. Marion was giving comfort, and yet if she had been asked why she could not have told. She did not try to define it further than to say to herself that she herself was having almost too much happiness. The village was *en fête*, and peasants lined the street leading to the church, ready with their hearty God-bless-you's. Lali sat between her husband and Mrs. Armour, apparently impassive until there came the question: "*Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?*" and General Armour's voice came clear and strong: "I do." Then a soft little cry broke from her, and she shivered slightly. Mrs. Armour did not notice, but Frank and Mrs. Lambert heard and saw, and both were afterwards watchful and solicitous. Frank caught Mrs. Lambert's eye, and it said, to a little motion of the head: "Do not appear to notice."

Lali was as if in a dream. She never took her eyes from the group at the altar until the end, and the two, now man and wife, turned to go into the vestry. Then she appeared to sink away into herself for a moment,

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before she fell into conversation with the others, as they moved towards the vestry.

"It was beautiful, wasn't it?" ventured Edward Lambert.

"The most beautiful wedding I ever saw," she answered, with a little shadow of meaning; and Lambert guessed that it was the only one she had seen since she came to England.

"How well Vidall looked," said Frank, "and as proud as a sultan. Did you hear what he said, as Marion came up the aisle?"

"No," responded Lambert.

"He said, 'By Jove, isn't she fine!' He didn't seem conscious that other people were present."

"Well, if a man hasn't some inspirations on his wedding-day when *is* he to have them?" said Mrs. Lambert. "For my part, I think that the woman always does that sort of thing better than a man. It is her really great occasion, and she masters it—the comedy is all hers."

They were just then entering the vestry.

"Or the tragedy, as the case may be," said Lali quietly, smiling at Marion. She had, as it were, recovered herself, and her words had come with that airy, impersonal tone which permits nothing of what is said in it to be taken seriously. Something said by the others had recalled her to herself, and she was now returned very suddenly to the old position of alertness and social *finesse*. Something icy seemed to pass over her, and she immediately lost all self-consciousness, and began to speak to her husband with less reserve than she had shown since he had come. But he was not deceived. He saw that at that very instant she was further away from him than she had ever been. He sighed, in spite of himself, as Lali, with well-turned

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words, said some loving greetings to Marion, and then talked a moment with Captain Vidall.

"Who can understand a woman?" said Lambert to his wife meaningly.

"Whoever will," she answered.

"How do you mean?"

"Whoever will wait like the saint upon the pillar, will suffer like the traveller in the desert; serve like a slave, and demand like a king; have patience greater than Job; love ceaseless as a fountain in the hills; who sees in the darkness and is not afraid of light; who distrusts not, neither believes, but stands ready to be taught; who is prepared for a kiss this hour and a reproach the next; who turneth neither to right nor left at her words, but hath an unswerving eye—these shall understand a woman."

"I never knew you so philosophical. Where did you get this deliverance on the subject?"

"May not even a woman have a moment of inspiration?"

"I should expect that of my wife."

"And I should expect *that* of my husband. It is trite to say that men are vain; I shall remark that they sit so much in their own light that they are surprised if another being crosses their disc."

"You always were clever, my dear, and you always were twice too good for me."

"Well, every woman—worth the knowing—is a missionary."

"Where does Lali come in?"

"Can you ask? To justify the claims of womanhood in spite of race—and all."

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"Truly. And is she not doing it well? See her now."

They were now just leaving the church, and Lali had taken General Armour's arm, while Richard led his mother to the carriage.

Lali was moving with a little touch of grandeur in her manner and a more than ordinary deliberation. She had had a moment of great weakness, and then there had come the reaction—carried almost too far by the force of the will. She was indeed straining herself too far. Four years of tension were culminating.

"See her now, Edward," repeated Mrs. Lambert.

"Yes, but if I'm not mistaken, my dear, she is doing so well that she's going to pieces. She's overstrung to-day. If it were you, you'd be in hysterics."

"I believe you are right," was the grave reply. "There will be an end to this comedy one way or another very soon."

A moment afterwards they were in a carriage rolling away to Greyhope.

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CHAPTER XV

THE END OF THE TRAIL

WHEN Marion was about leaving with her husband for the railway station, she sought out Lali, and found her standing half hidden by the curtains of a window, looking out at little Richard, who was parading his pony up and down before the house. An unutterable sweetness looked out of Marion's eyes. She had found, as it seemed to her, and as so many have believed until their lives' end, the secret of existence. Lali saw the glistening joy, and responded to it, just as it was in her being to respond to every change of nature—that sensitiveness was in her as deep as being.

"You are very happy, dear?" she said to Marion.

"You cannot think how happy, Lali. And I want to say that I feel sure that you will yet be as happy, even happier than I. Oh, it will come—it will come. And you have the boy now—so fine, so good."

Lali looked out to where little Richard disported himself; her eyes shone, and she turned with a responsive but still sad smile to Marion. "Marion," she said gently, "the *other* should have come before *he* came."

"Frank loves you, Lali."

"Who knows? And then, oh, I cannot tell! How can one force one's heart? No, no! One has to wait, and wait, even if the heart grows harder, and one gets hopeless."

Marion kissed her on the cheek and smiled. "Some day soon the heart will open up, and then such a flood

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will pour out! See, Lali. I am going now, and our lives won't run together so much again ever, perhaps. But I want to tell you now that your coming to us has done me a world of good—helped me to be a wiser girl; and I ought to be a better woman for it. Good-bye."

They were calling to her, and with a hurried embrace the two parted, and in a few moments the bride and bridegroom were on their way to the new life. As the carriage disappeared in a turn of the limes, Lali vanished also to her room. She was not seen at dinner. Mackenzie came to say that she was not very well, and that she would keep to her room. Frank sent several times during the evening to inquire after her, and was told that she was resting comfortably. He did not try to see her, and in this was wise. He had now fallen into a habit of delicate consideration, which brought its own reward. He had given up hope of winning her heart or confidence by storm, and had followed his finer and better instincts—had come to the point where he made no claims, and even in his own mind stood upon no rights. His mother brought him word from Lali before he retired, to say that she was sorry she could not see him, but giving him a message and a commission into town the following morning for their son. Her tact had grown as her strength had declined. There is something in failing health—ill-health without disease—which sharpens and refines the faculties, and makes the temper exquisitely sensitive—that is, with people of a certain good sort. The *aplomb* and spirited manner in which Lali had borne herself at the wedding and after, was the last flicker of her old strength, and of the second phase in her married life. The end of th phase came with the ride at the quick-set hedg with a less intent but as active a temper.

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The next morning she did not appear at breakfast, but sent a message to Frank to say that she was better, and adding another commission for town. All day, save for an hour on the balcony, she kept to her room, and lay down for the greater part of the afternoon. In the evening, when Frank returned, his mother sent for him, and frankly told him that she thought it would be better for him to go away for a few weeks or so; that Lali was in a languid, nervous state, and she thought that by the time he got back—if he would go—she would be better, and that better things would come for him.

Frank was no longer the vain, selfish fellow who had married Lali—something of the best in him was at work. He understood, and suggested a couple of weeks with Richard at their little place in Scotland. Also, he saw his wife for a little while that evening. She had been lying down, but she disposed herself in a deep chair before he entered. He was a little shocked to see, as it were all at once, how delicate she looked. He came and sat down near her, and after a few moments of friendly talk, in which he spoke solicitously of her health, he told her that he thought of going up to Scotland with Richard for a few weeks, if she saw no objection.

She did not quite understand why he was going. She thought that perhaps he felt the strain of the situation, and that a little absence would be good for both. This pleased her. She did not shrink, as she had so often done since his return, when he laid his hand on hers for an instant, as he asked her if she were willing that he should go. Sometimes in the past few weeks she had almost hated him. Now she was a little sorry for him, but she said that of course he must go; that

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no doubt it was good that he should go, and so on, in gentle, allusive phrases. The next evening she came down to dinner, and was more like herself as she was before Frank came back, but she ate little, and before the men came into the drawing-room she had excused herself, and retired; at which Mrs. Lambert shook her head apprehensively at herself, and made up her mind to stay at Greyhope longer than she intended.

Which was good for all concerned; for, two nights after Frank and Richard had gone, Mackenzie hurried down to the drawing-room with the news that Lali had been found in a faint on her chamber floor. That was the beginning of weeks of anxiety, in which Mrs. Lambert was to Mrs. Armour what Marion would have been, and more; and both to Lali all that mother and sister could be.

Their patient was unlike any other that they had known. Feverish, she had no fever; with a gentle, hacking cough, she had no lung trouble; nervous, she still was oblivious to very much that went on around her; hungering often for her child, she would not let him remain long with her when he came. Her sleep was broken, and she sometimes talked to herself, whether consciously or unconsciously they did not know. The doctor had no remedies but tonics—he did not understand the case; but he gently ventured the opinion that it was mostly a matter of race, that she was pining because civilisation had been infused into her veins—the old insufficient theory.

"Stuff and nonsense!" said General Armour, when his wife told him. "The girl bloomed till Frank came back. God bless my soul! she's falling in love, and doesn't know what it is."

He was only partly right, perhaps, but he was nearer

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the truth than the dealer in quinine and a cheap philosophy of life. "She'll come around all right, you'll see. Decline—decline be hanged! The girl shall live, —damn it, she shall!" he blurted out, as his wife's eyes filled with tears.

Mrs. Lambert was much of the same mind as the general, but went further. She said to Mrs. Armour that in all her life she had never seen so sweet a character, so sensitive a mind—a mind whose nurse was imagination. And therein the little lady showed herself a person of wisdom. For none of them had yet reckoned with that one great element in Leil's character —that thing which is the birthright of all who own the North for a mother, the awe of imagination, the awe and the pain, which in its finest expression comes near, very near, to the supernatural. Leil's mind was all pictures; she never thought of things in words, she saw them; and everything in her life arranged itself in a scene before her, made vivid by her sensitive soul, so much more sensitive now with health failing, the spirit wearing out the body. These was her malady—the sick heart and mind.

A new sickness wore upon her. It had not touched her from the day she left the North until she sang "The Chase of the Yellow Swan" that first evening after Frank's return. Ever since then her father was much in her mind—the memory of her childhood, and its sweet, inspiring friendship with Nature. [illegible] ness and coarseness of the life was re[illegible] ory by the exquisite atmosphere of t[illegible] sweet earth, the strong bracing win[illegible] of trees and streams and grass and [illegible]

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Had she done right? She had cut him off, as if he had never been—her people, her country also; and for what? For this—for this sinking sense, this failing body, this wear and tear of mind and heart, this constant study to be possible where she had once been declared by the world to be impossible.

One night she lay sleeping after a rather feverish day, when it was thought best to keep the child from her. Suddenly she waked, and sat up. Looking straight before her, she said:

"I will arise, and will go to my Father, and will say unto Him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son."

She said nothing more than this, and presently lay back, with eyes wide open, gazing before her. Like this she lay all night long, a strange, aching look in her face. There had come upon her the sudden impulse to leave it all, and go back to her father. But the child—that gave her pause. Towards morning she fell asleep, and slept far on into the day, a thing that had not occurred for a long time.

At noon a letter arrived for her. It came into General Armour's hands, and he, seeing that it bore the stamp of the Hudson's Bay Company, with the legend, *From Fort St. Charles*, concluded that it was news of Lali's father. Then came the question whether the letter should be given to her. The general was for doing so, and he prevailed. If it were bad news, he said, it might raise her out of her present apathy and by changing the play of her emotions do her good in the end.

The letter was given to her in the afternoon. She took it apathetically, but presently, seeing where it was from, she opened it hurriedly with a little cry which was very like a moan too. There were two letters inside—

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one from the factor at Fort Charles in English, and one from her father in the Indian language. She read her father's letter first, the other fluttered to her feet from her lap. General Armour, looking down, saw a sentence in it which, he felt, warranted him in picking it up, reading it, and retaining it, his face settling into painful lines as he did so. Days afterwards, Lali read her father's letter to Mrs. Armour. It ran:

My daughter,
Lali, the sweet noise of the Spring:

Thy father speaks.

I have seen more than half a hundred moons come like the sickle and go like the eye of a running buck, swelling with fire, but I hear not thy voice at my tent door since the first one came and went.

Thou art gone.

Thy face was like the sun on running water; thy hand hung on thy wrists like the ear of a young deer; thy foot was as soft on the grass as the rain on a child's cheek; thy words were like snow in summer, which melts in richness on the hot earth. Thy bow and arrow hang lonely upon the wall, and thy empty cup is beside the pot.

Thou art gone.

Thou hast become great with a great race, and that is well. Our race is not great, and shall not be, until the hour when the Mighty Men of the Kimash Hills arise from their sleep and possess the land again.

Thou art gone.

But thou hast seen many worlds, and thou hast learned great things, and thou and I shall meet no more; for how shall the wise kneel at the feet of the foolish, as thou didst kneel once at thy father's feet?

Thou art gone.

High on the Clip Claw Hills the trees are green, in the Plain of the Rolling Stars the wings of the wild fowl are many, and fine is the mist upon Goldfly Lake; and the heart of Eye-of-the-Moon is strong.

Thou art here.

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The trail is open to the White Valley, and the Scarlet Hunter hath saved me, when my feet strayed in the plains and my eyes were blinded.

Thou art here.

I have friends on the Far Off River who show me the yards where the musk-ox gather; I have found the gardens of the young sable, and my tents are full of store.

Thou art here.

In the morning my spirit is light, and I have harvest where I would gather, and the stubble is for my foes. In the evening my limbs are heavy, and I am at rest in my blanket. The hunt is mine and sleep is mine, and my soul is cheerful when I remember thee.

Thou art here.

I have built for thee a place where thy spirit comes. I hear thee when thou callest to me, and I kneel outside the door, for thou art wise, and thou speakest to me; but thee as thou art in a far land I shall see no more. This is my word to thee, that thou mayst know that I am not alone. Thou shalt not come again, as thou once went; it is not meet. But by these other ways I will speak to thee.

Thou art here.

Farewell. I have spoken.

Lali finished reading, and then slowly folded up the letter. The writing was that of the wife of the factor at Fort Charles—she knew it. She sat for a minute looking straight before her. She read her father's allegory. Barbarian in so much as her father was, he had beaten this thing out with the hammer of wisdom. He missed her, but she must not come back; she had outgrown the old life—he knew it and she was with him in spirit, in his memory; she understood his picturesque phrases, borrowed from the large, affluent world about him. Something of the righteousness and magnanimity of this letter passed into her, giving her for an instant a sort of peace. She had needed it—needed it to justify herself, and she had been justified. To return was im-

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possible—she had known that all along, though she had not admitted it; the struggle had been but a kind of remorse, after all. That her father should come to her was also impossible—it was neither for her happiness nor his. She had been two different persons in her life, and the first was only a memory to the second. The father had solved the problem for her. He too was now a memory that she could think on with pleasure as associated with the girl she once was. He had been well provided for by her husband, and—

General Armour put his hand on hers gently and said:

"Lali, without your permission I have read this other letter."

She did not appear curious. She was thinking still of her father's letter to her. She nodded abstractedly.

"Lali," he continued, "this says that your father wished that letter to be written to you just as he said it at the Fort on the day of the Feast of the Yellow Swan. He stood up—the factor writes so here—and said that he had been thinking much for years, and that the time had come when he must speak to his daughter over the seas—"

General Armour paused. Lali inclined her head, smiled wistfully, and held up the letter for him to see. The general continued:

"So he spoke as has been written to you, and then they had the Feast of the Yellow Swan, and that night—" He paused again, but presently, his voice a little husky, he went on: "That night he set out on a [illegible]—he lifted the letter and looked at it, [illegible]-in-law,—"on [illegible]; and,

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peace in the White Valley, and he would rest till the world should come to its Spring again, and the noise of its coming should be in his ears. Those, Lali, are his very words."

His hand closed on hers, he reached out and took the other hand, from which the paper fluttered, and clasped both tight in his own firm grasp.

"My daughter," he said, "you have another father."

With a low cry, like that of a fawn struck in the throat, she slid forward on her knees beside him, and buried her face on his arm. She understood. Her father was dead. Mrs. Armour came forward, and, kneeling also, drew the dark head to her bosom. Then that flood came which sweeps away the rust that gathers in the eyes and breaks through the closed dikes of the heart.

Hours after, when she had fallen into a deep sleep, General Armour and his wife met outside her bedroom door.

"I shall not leave her," Mrs. Armour said. "Send for Frank. His time has almost come."

But it would not have come so soon had not something else occurred. The day that he came back from Scotland he entered his wife's room, prepared for a change in her, yet he did not find so much to make him happy as he had hoped. She received him with a gentleness which touched him, she let her hand rest in his, she seemed glad to have him with her. All bars had been cast down between them, but he knew that she had not given him all, and she knew it also. But she hoped he did not know, and she dreaded the hour when he would speak out of his now full heart. He did not yet urge his affection on her, he was simply devoted, and watchful, and tender, and delightedly hopeful.

But one night she came tapping at his door. When

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he opened it, she said: "Oh come, come! Richard is ill! I have sent for the doctor."

Henceforth she was her old self again, with a transformed spirit, her motherhood spending itself in a thousand ways. She who was weak bodily became now much stronger; the light of new vigour came to her eyes; she and her husband, in the common peril, worked together, thinking little of themselves, and all of the child. The last stage of the journey to happiness was being passed, and if it was not obvious to themselves, the others, Marion and Captain Vidall included, saw it.

One anxious day, after the family doctor had left the sick child's room, Marion, turning to the father and mother, said: "Greyhope will be itself again. I will go and tell Richard that the danger is over."

As she turned to do so, Richard entered the room. "I have seen the doctor," he began, "and the little chap is going to pull along like a house afire."

Tapping Frank affectionately on the arm, he was about to continue, but he saw what stopped him. He saw the last move in Frank Armour's tragic-comedy. He and Marion left the room as quickly as was possible to him, for, as he said himself, he was "slow at a quick march"; and a moment afterwards the wife heard without demur her husband's tale of love for her.

Yet, as if to remind him of the wrong he had done, Heaven never granted Frank Armour another child.

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THE POMP OF THE LAVILETTES

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TO
THE MEMORY
OF
SIR GEORGE INNES
AND TO
LADY INNES
IN TOKEN OF
HAPPY AND HOSPITABLE HOURS
AT "WINSLOW"

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INTRODUCTION

I BELIEVE that *The Pomp of the Lavilettes* has elements which justify consideration. Its original appearance was, however, not made under wholly favourable conditions. It is the only book of mine which I ever sold outright. This was in 1896. Mr. Lamson, of Messrs. Lamson & Wolffe, energetic and enterprising young publishers of Boston, came to see me at Atlantic City (I was on a visit to the United States at the time), and made a gallant offer for the English, American and colonial book and serial rights. I felt that some day I could get the book back under my control if I so desired, while the chances of the book making an immediate phenomenal sale were not great. There is something in the nature of a story which determines its popularity. I knew that *The Seats of the Mighty* and *The Right of Way* would have a great sale, and after they were written I said as much to my publishers. There was the element of general appeal in the narratives and the characters. Without detracting from the character-drawing, the characters, or the story in *The Pomp of the Lavilettes*, I was convinced that the book would not make the universal appeal. Yet I should have written the story, even if it had been destined only to have a hundred readers. It had to be written. I wanted to write what was in me, and that invasion of a little secluded French-Canadian society by a ne'er-do-well of the over-sea aristocracy had a psychological interest, which I could not resist. I thought it ought to be worked out and recorded, and particularly as the time chosen—1837—marked a large collision between the British and the French interests in French Canada, or rather of French political interests and the narrow administrative prejudices and nepotism of the British executive in Quebec.

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It is a satisfaction to include this book in a definitive edition of my works, for I think that, so far as it goes, it is truthfully characteristic of French life in Canada, that its pictures are faithful, and that the character-drawing represents a closer observation than any of the previous works, slight as the volume is. It holds the same relation to *The Right of Way* that *The Trail of the Sword* holds to *The Seats of the Mighty*, that *A Ladder of Swords* holds to *The Battle of the Strong*, that *Donovan Pasha* holds to *The Weavers*. Instinctively, and, as I believe, naturally, I gave to each ambitious, and—so far as conception goes—to each important novel of mine, an *avant coureur*. *The Trail of the Sword*, *A Ladder of Swords*, *Donovan Pasha* and *The Pomp of the Lavilettes*, are all very short novels, not exceeding in any case sixty thousand words, while the novels dealing in a larger way with the same material—the same people and environment, with the same *mise-en-scène*, were each of them at least one hundred and forty thousand words in length, or over two and a half times as long. I do not say that this is a system which I devised; but it was, from the first, the method I pursued instinctively; on the basis that dealing with a smaller subject—with what one might call a *genre* picture first, I should get well into my field, and acquire greater familiarity with my material than I should have if I attempted the larger work at once.

This is not to say that the smaller work was immature. On the contrary, I believe that at least these shorter works are quite mature in their treatment and in their workmanship and design. Naturally, however, they made less demand on all one's resources, they were narrower in scope and less complicated, than the longer works, like *The Seats of the Mighty*, which made heavier call upon the capacities of one's art. The only occasion on which I have not preceded a very long novel of life in a new field, by a very short one, is in the writing of *The Judgment House*. For this book, however, it might be said, that all the last twenty

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years was a preparation, since the scenes were scenes in which I had lived and moved, and in a sense played a part; while the ten South African chapters of the book placed in the time of the Natal campaign needed no pioneer narrative to increase familiarity with the material, the circumstances and the country itself. I knew it all from study on the spot.

From *The Pomp of the Lavilettes*, with which might be associated *The Lane That Had no Turning*, to *The Right of Way*, was a natural progression; it was the emergence of a big subject which must be treated in a large bold way, if it was to succeed. It succeeded to a degree which could not fail to gratify any one who would rather have a wide audience than a contracted one, who believes that to be popular is not necessarily to be contemptible—as the ancient Pistol put it, "base, common and popular."

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THE POMP OF THE LAVILETTES

CHAPTER I

You could not call the place a village, nor yet could it be called a town. Viewed from the bluff, on the English side of the river, it was a long stretch of small farmhouses—some painted red, with green shutters, some painted white, with red shutters—set upon long strips of land, green, yellow, and brown, as it chanced to be pasture land, fields of grain, or "plough-land."

These long strips of property, fenced off one from the other, so narrow and so precise, looked like pieces of ribbon laid upon a wide quilt of level country. Far back from this level land lay the dark, limestone hills, which had rambled down from Labrador, and, crossing the River St. Lawrence, stretched away into the English province. The farmhouses and the long strips of land were in such regular procession, it might almost have seemed to the eye of the whimsical spectator that the houses and the ribbon were of a piece, and had been set down there, sentinel after sentinel, like so many toy soldiers, along the banks of the great river. There was one important break in the long line of precise settlement, and that was where the Parish Church, about the middle of the line, had gathered round it a score or so of buildings. But this only added to the strength of the line rather than broke its uniformity. Wide stretches of meadow-land reached back from the Parish Church until they were lost in the darker verdure of the hills.

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On either side of the Parish Church, with its tall, stone tower, were two stout-built houses, set among trees and shrubbery. They were low set, broad and square, with heavy-studded, old-fashioned doors. The roofs were steep and high, with dormer windows and a sort of shelf at the gables.

They were both on the highest ground in the whole settlement, a little higher than the site of the Parish Church. The one was the residence of the old seigneur, Monsieur Duhamel; the other was the Manor Casimbault, empty now of all the Casimbaults. For a year it had lain idle, until the only heir of the old family, which was held in high esteem as far back as the time of Louis Quinze, returned from his dissipations in Quebec to settle in the old place or sell it to the highest bidder.

Behind the Manor Casimbault and the Seigneury, thus flanking the church at reverential distance, another large house completed the acute triangle, forming the apex of the solid wedge of settlement drawn about the church. This was the great farmhouse of the Lavilettes, one of the most noticeable families in the parish.

Of the little buildings bunched beside the church, not the least important was the post-office, kept by Papin Baby, who was also keeper of the bridge which was almost at the door of the office. This bridge crossed a stream that ran into the large river, forming a harbour. It opened in the middle, permitting boats and vessels to go through. Baby worked it by a lever. A hundred yards or so above the bridge was the parish mill, and between were the Hotel France, the little house of Doctor Montmagny, the Regimental Surgeon (as he was called), the cooper shop, the blacksmith, the tinsmith and the grocery shops. Just beyond the mill,

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upon the banks of the river, was the most notorious, if not the most celebrated, house in the settlement.

Shangois, the travelling notary, lived in it—when he was not travelling. When he was, he left it unlocked, all save one room; and people came and went through the house as they pleased, eyeing with curiosity the dusty, tattered books upon the shelves, the empty bottles in the corner, the patchwork of cheap prints, notices of sales, summonses, accounts, certificates of baptism, memoranda, receipted bills—though they were few—tacked or stuck to the wall.

No grown-up person of the village meddled with anything, no matter how curious: for this consistent, if unspoken, trust displayed by Shangois appealed to their better instincts. Besides, they like the children had a wholesome fear of the disreputable, slimmish, dishevelled little notary, with the beady-like eyes, yellow stockings, hooked nose and palsied left hand. Even the knapsack and black bag he carried under his arm contained more secrets than most people wished to tempt or challenge forth. Few cared to anger the little man, whose father and grandfather had been notaries here before him.

Like others in the settlement, Shangois was the last of his race. He could put his finger upon the secret history and private lives of nearly every person in a dozen parishes, but most of all in Bonaventure—for such this long parish was called. He knew to a hair's breadth the social value of every human being in the parish. He was too cunning and acute to be a gossip, but by direct and indirect ways he made every person feel that the Curé and the Lord might forgive their pasts, but he could never forget them, nor wished to do

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drunken Philippe Casimbault, for the Curé, and for the Lavilettes, who owned the great farmhouse at the apex of that wedge of village life, he had a profound respect. The parish generally did not share his respect for the Lavilettes.

Once upon a time, beyond the memories of any in the parish, the Lavilettes of Bonaventure were a great people. Disaster came, debt and difficulty followed, fire consumed the old house in which their dignity had been cherished, and at last they had no longer their seigneurial position, but that of ordinary farmers who work and toil in the field like any of the fifty-acre farmers on the banks of the St. Lawrence River.

Monsieur Louis Lavilette, the present head of the house, had not married well. At the time when the feeling against the English was the strongest, and when his own fortunes were precarious, he had married a girl somewhat older than himself, who was half English and half French, her father having been a Hudson's Bay Company factor on the north coast of the river. In proportion as their fortunes and their popularity declined, and their once notable position as an old family became scarce a memory even, the pride of the Lavilettes increased.

Madame Lavilette made strong efforts to secure her place; but she was not of an old French family, and this was an easy and convenient weapon against her. Besides, she had no taste, and her manners were much inferior to those of her husband. What impression he managed to make by virtue of a good deal of natural dignity, she soon unmade by her lack of tact. She had no innate breeding, though she was not vulgar. She lacked sense a little and sensitiveness much.

The Casimbaults and the wife of the old seigneur

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made no friends of the Lavilettes, but the old seigneur kept up a formal habit of calling twice a year at the Lavilettes' big farmhouse, which, in spite of all misfortune, grew bigger as the years went on. Probably, in spite of everything, Monsieur Lavilette and his family would have succeeded better socially had it not been for one or two unpopular lawsuits brought by the Lavilettes against two neighbours, small farmers, one of whom was clearly in the wrong, and the other as clearly in the right.

When, after years had gone by, and the children of the Lavilettes had grown up, young Monsieur Casimbault came from Quebec to sell his property (it seemed to the people of Bonaventure like selling his birthright), he was greatly surprised to find Monsieur Lavilette ready with ten thousand dollars, to purchase the Manor Casimbault. Before the parish had time to take breath Monsieur Casimbault had handed over the deed, pocketed the money, and leaving the ancient heritage of his family in the hands of the Lavilettes, (who forthwith prepared to enter upon it, house and land), had hurried away to Quebec again without any pangs of sentiment.

It was a little before this time that impertinent peasants in the parish began to sing:

> "O when you hear my little silver drum,
> And when I blow my little gold trompette-a,
> You must drop your work and come,
> You must leave your pride at home,
> And duck your heads before the Lavilettes."

Gatineau the miller, and Baby the keeper of the bridge, gave their own reasons for the renewed [illegible]

Farcinelle, farrier, farmer and member of the provincial legislature, whose house lay behind the piece of maple wood, a mile or so to the right of the Lavilettes' farmhouse. Farcinelle's engagement to Sophie had come as a surprise to all, for, so far as people knew, there had been no courting. Madame Lavilette had encouraged, had even tempted, the spontaneous and jovial Farcinelle. Though he had never made a speech in the House of Assembly, and it was hard to tell why he was elected, save because everybody liked him, his official position and his popularity held an important place in Madame Lavilette's long-developed plans, which at last were to place her in a position equal to that of the old seigneur, and launch her upon society at the capital.

They had gone more than once to the capital, where their family had been well-known fifty years before, but few doors had been opened to them. They were farmers—only farmers—and Madame Lavilette made no remarkable impression. Her dress was florid and not in excellent taste, and her accent was rather crude. Sophie had gone to school at the convent in the city, but she had no ambition. She had inherited the stolid simplicity of her English grandfather. When her schooling was finished she let her school friends drop, and came back to Bonaventure, rather stately, given to reading, and little inclined to bother her head about anybody.

Christine, the younger sister, had gone to Quebec also, but after a week of rebellion, bad temper and sharp speaking, had come home again without ceremony, and refused to return. Despite certain likenesses to her mother, she had a deep, if unintelligible, admiration for her father, and she never tired looking at the picture of her great-grandfather in the dress of a chevalier of

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St. Louis—almost the only thing that had been saved from the old Manor House destroyed so long before her time. Perhaps it was the importance she attached to her ancestry which made her impatient with their present position, and with people in the parish who would not altogether recognize their claims. It was that which made her give a little [illegible] to the miller and the postmaster when she passed the mill.

"Come, [illegible]," said Baby, "what's all this pom-pom of the Lavilettes?"

The miller pursed out his lips, contracted his brows and arranged his loose waistcoat carefully on his fat stomach.

"Money," said he, [illegible], as though he had solved the great question of the universe.

"La! la! But other folks have money, and they step about Bonaventure no more louder than a cat."

"Blood," added Gatineau, corrugating his brows still more.

"Bosh!"

"Both together—money and blood," rejoined the miller. Overcome by his exertions, he wheezed so tremendously that great billows of excitement raised his waistcoat, and a perspiration broke out upon his mealy face, making a paste which the sun, through the open doorway, immediately began to bake into a crust.

"Pah, the airs they have always had, those Lavilettes!" said Baby. "They will not do this because it is not polite, they will not do that because they are too proud. They say that once there was a baron in their family. Who can tell how long ago! Perhaps when John the Baptist was alive. What is that? [illegible]

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then—*mais*, there is the grand difference! They have save and save twenty years to pay their debts and to buy a seigneury, like that baron who live in the time of John the Baptist. Now it is to stand on a ladder to speak to them. And when all's done, they marry Ma'm'selle Sophie to a farrier, to that Magon Farcinelle —bah!"

"Magon was at the Laval College in Quebec; he has ten thousand dollars; he is the best judge of horses in the province, and he's a Member of Parliament to boot," said the miller, puffing. "He is a great man almost."

"He's no better judge of horses than M'sieu' Nic Lavilette—eh, that's a bully bad scamp, my Gatineau!" responded Baby. "He's the best in the family. He is a grand sport; yes. It's he that fetched Ma'm'selle Sophie to the hitching-post. *Voilà*, he can wind them all round his finger!"

Baby looked round to see if any one was near; then he drew the miller's head down by pulling at his collar, and whispered in his ear:

"He's hot foot for the Rebellion; that's one good thing," he said. "If he wipes out the English—"

"Hold your tongue," nervously interrupted Gatineau, for just then two or three loiterers of the parish came shambling around the corner of the mill.

Baby stopped short, and as they greeted the newcomers their attention was drawn to the stage-coach from St. Croix coming over the little hill near by.

"Here's M'sieu' Nic now—and who's with him?" said Baby, stepping about nervously in his excitement. "I knew there was something up. M'sieu' Nic's been writing long letters from Montreal."

Baby's look suggested that he knew more than his

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position as postmaster entitled him to know; but the furtive droop at the corner of his eyes showed also that his secretiveness was equal to his cowardice.

On the seat, beside the driver of the coach, was Nicolas Lavilette, black-haired, brown-eyed, athletic, reckless-looking, with a cast in his left eye, which gave him a look of drollery, in keeping with his buoyant, daring nature. Beside him was a figure much more noticeable and unusual.

Lean, dark-featured, with keen-glancing eyes, and a body with a faculty for finding corners of ease; waving hair, streaked with grey, black moustache, and a hectic flush on the cheeks, lending to the world-wise face a wistful look—that, with near six feet of height, was the picture of his friend.

"Who is it?" asked the miller, with bulging eyes.

"An English nobleman," answered Baby.

"How do you know?" asked Gatineau.

"How do I know you are a fat, cheating miller?" replied the postmaster, with cunning care and a touch of malice. Malice was the only power Baby knew.

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CHAPTER II

In the matter of power, Baby, the inquisitive postmaster and keeper of the bridge, was unlike the new arrival in Bonaventure. The abilities of the Honourable Tom Ferrol lay in a splendid plausibility, a spontaneous blarney. He could no more help being spendthrift of his affections and his morals than of his money, and many a time he had wished that his money was as inexhaustible as his emotions.

In point of morals, any of the Lavilettes presented a finer average than their new guest, who had come to give their feasting distinction, and what more time was to show. Indeed, the Hon. Mr. Ferrol had no morals to speak of, and very little honour. He was the penniless son of an Irish peer, who was himself wellnigh penniless; and he and his sister, whose path of life at home was not easy after her marriageable years had passed, drew from the consols the small sum of money their mother had left them, and sailed away for New York.

Six months of life there, with varying fortune in which a well-to-do girl in society gave him a promise of marriage, and then Ferrol found himself jilted for a baronet, who owned a line of steamships and could give the ambitious lady a title. In his sick heart he had spoken profanely of the future Lady of Title, had bade her good-bye with a smile and an agreeable piece of wit, and had gone home to his flat and sobbed like a schoolboy; for, as much as he could love anybody, he loved this girl. He and the faithful sister vanished from New York and appeared in Quebec, where they

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were made welcome in Government House, at the citadel, and among all who cared to know the weight of an inherited title. For a time, the fact that he had little or no money did not temper their hospitality with niggardliness or caution. But their cheery and witty guest began to take more wine than was good for him or comfortable for others; his bills at the clubs remained unpaid, his landlord harried him, his tailors pursued him; and then he borrowed cheerfully and well.

However, there came an end to this, and to the acceptance of his I O U's. Following the instincts of his Irish ancestors, he then leagued with a professional smuggler, and began to deal in contraband liquors and cigars. But before this occurred, he had sent his sister to a little secluded town, where she should be well out of earshot of his doings or possible troubles. He would have shielded her from harm at the cost of his life. His loyalty to her was only limited by the irresponsibility of his nature and a certain incapacity to see the difference between radical right and radical wrong. His honour was a matter of tradition, such as it was, and in all else he had the inherent invalidity of some of his distant forebears. For a time all went well, then discovery came, and only the kind intriguing of as good friends as any man deserved prevented his arrest and punishment. But it all got whispered about; and while some ladies saw a touch of romance in his doing professionally and wholesale what they themselves did in an amateurish way with laces, gloves and so on, men viewed the matter more seriously, and advised Ferrol to leave Quebec.

Since that time he had lived by his wits—and pleasing, dangerous wits they were—at Montreal and elsewhere. But fatal ill-luck pursued him. Presently a

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cold settled on his lungs. In the dead of winter, after sending what money he had to his sister, he had lived a week or more in a room, with no fire and little food. As time went on, the cold got no better. After sundry vicissitudes and twists of fortune, he met Nicolas Lavilette at a horse race, and a friendship was struck up. He frankly and gladly accepted an invitation to attend the wedding of Sophie Lavilette, and to make a visit at the farm, and at the Manor Casimbault afterwards. Nicolas spoke lightly of the Manor Casimbault, yet he had pride in it also; for, scamp as he was, and indifferent to anything like personal dignity or self-respect, he admired his father and had a natural, if good-natured, arrogance akin to Christine's self-will.

It meant to Ferrol freedom from poverty, misery and financial subterfuge for a moment; and he could be quiet—for, as he said, "This confounded cold takes the iron out of my blood."

Like all people stricken with this disease, he never called it anything but a cold. All those illusions which accompany the malady were his. He would always be better "to-morrow." He told the two or three friends who came from their beds in the early morning to see him safely off from Montreal to Bonaventure that he would be all right as soon as he got out into the country; that he sat up too late in the town; and that he had just got a new prescription which had cured a dozen people "with colds and hemorrhages." His was only a cold—just a cold; that was all. He was a bit weak sometimes, and what he needed was something to pull up his strength. The country would do this—plenty of fresh air, riding, walking, and that sort of thing.

He had left Montreal behind in gay spirits, and he continued gay for several hours, holding himself erect

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in the seat, noting the landscape, telling stories; but he stumbled with weakness as they got out of the coach for luncheon. He drank three full portions of whiskey at table, and ate nothing. The silent landlady who waited on them at last brought a huge bowl of milk, and set it before him without a word. A flush passed swiftly across his face and faded away, as, with quick sensitiveness, he glanced at Nicolas and another passenger, a fat priest. They took no notice, and, reassured, he said, with a laugh, that the landlady knew exactly what he wanted. Lifting the dish, he drained it at a gasp, though the milk almost choked him, and, to the apprehension of his hostess, set the bowl spinning on the table like a top. Another illusion of the disease was his: that he succeeded perfectly in deceiving everybody round him with his pathetic make-believe; and, unlike most deceivers, he deceived himself as well. The two actions, inconsistent as they were, were reconciled in him, as in all the race of consumptives, by some strange chemistry of the mind and spirit. He was on the broad, undiverging highway to death; yet, with every final token about him that he was in the enemy's country, surrounded, trapped, soon to be passed unceremoniously inside the citadel at the end of the avenue, he kept signalling back to old friends that all was well, and he told himself that to-morrow the king should have his own again—"To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow!"

He was not very thin in body; his face was full, and at times his eyes were singularly and fascinatingly bright. He had colour—that hectic flush which, on his cheek, was almost beautiful. One would have turned twice to see. The quantities of spirits that he drank

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men. To him it was food, taken up, absorbed by the fever of his disease, giving him a real, not a fictitious strength; and so it would continue to do till some artery burst and choked him, or else, by some miracle of air and climate, the hole in his lung healed up again; which he, in his elation, believed would be "to-morrow." Perhaps the air, the food, and life of Bonaventure were the one medicine he needed!

But, in the moment Nicolas said to him that Bonaventure was just over the hill, that they would be able to see it now, he had a sudden feeling of depression. He felt that he would give anything to turn back. A perspiration broke out on his forehead and his cheek. His eyes had a wavering, anxious look. Some of that old sanity of the once healthy man was making a last effort for supremacy, breaking in upon illusive hopes and irresponsible deceptions.

It was only for a moment. Presently, from the top of the hill, they looked down upon the long line of little homes lying along the banks of the river like peaceful watchmen in a pleasant land, with corn and wine and oil at hand. The tall cross on the spire of the Parish Church was itself a message of hope. He did not define it so; but the impression vaguely, perhaps superstitiously, possessed him. It was this vague influence, perhaps (for he was not a Catholic), which made him involuntarily lift his hat, as did Nicolas, when they passed a calvary; which induced him likewise to make the sacred gesture when they met a priest, with an acolyte and swinging censer, hurrying silently on to the home of some dying parishioner. The sensations were different from anything he had known. He had been used to the Catholic religion in Ireland; he had seen it in France, Spain, Italy and elsewhere; but here was

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something essentially primitive, archaically touching and convincing.

His spirits came back with a rush; he had a splendid feeling of exaltation. He was not religious, never could be, but he felt religious; he was ill, but he felt that he was on the open highway to health; he was dishonest, but he felt an honest man; he was the son of a peer, but he felt himself brother to the fat miller by the roadway, to Baby, the postmaster and keeper of the bridge, to the Regimental Surgeon, who stood in his doorway, pulling at his moustache and blowing clouds of tobacco smoke into the air.

Shangois, the notary, met his eye as they dashed on. A new sensation—not a change in the elation he felt, but an instant's interruption—came to him. He asked who Shangois was, and Nicolas told him.

"A notary, eh?" he remarked gaily. "Well, why does he disguise himself? He looks like a ragpicker, and has the eye of Solomon and the devil in one. He ought to be in some Star Chamber—Palmerston could make use of him."

"Oh, he's kept busy enough with secrets here!" was Nicolas's laughing reply.

"It's only a difference of size in the secrets anyhow," was Ferrol's response in the same vein; and in a few moments they had passed the Seigneury, and were drawn up before the great farmhouse.

Its appearance was rather comfortable and commodious than impressive, but it had the air of home and undepreciating use. There was one beautiful clump of hollyhocks and sunflowers in the front garden; a corner of the main building was covered with morning-glories; a fence to the left was overgrown with grape-vines, making it look like a hedge. A tall tree occupied a

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spot opposite to the pretty copse of sunflowers and hollyhocks; and the rest of the garden was green, save just round a little "summer-house," in the corner, with its back to the road, near which Sophie had set a palisade of the golden-rod flower. Just beside the front door was a bush of purple lilac; and over the door, in copper, was the coat-of-arms of the Lavilettes, placed there, at Madame's insistence, in spite of the dying wish of Lavilette's father, a feeble, babbling old gentleman in knee-breeches, stock, and swallow-tailed coat, who, broken down by misfortune, age and loneliness, had gathered himself together for one last effort for becomingness against his daughter-in-law's false tastes —and had died the day after. He was spared the indignity of the coat-of-arms on the tombstone only by the fierce opposition of Louis Lavilette, who upon this point had his first quarrel with his wife.

Ferrol saw no particular details in his first view of the house. The picture was satisfying to a tired man—comfort, quiet, the bread of idleness to eat, and welcome, admiring faces round him. Monsieur Lavilette stood in the doorway, and behind him, at a carefully disposed distance, was Madame, rather more emphatically dressed than necessary. As he shook hands genially with Madame he saw Sophie and Christine in the doorway of the parlour. His spirits took another leap. His inexhaustible emotions were out upon cheerful parade at once.

The Lavilettes immediately became pensioners of his affections. The first hour of his coming he himself did not know which sister his ample heart was spending itself on most—Sophie, with her English face, and slow, docile, well-bred manner, or Christine, dark, *petite*, impertinent, gay-hearted, wilful, unsparing of her tongue

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for others—or for herself. Though Christine's lips and cheeks glowed, and her eyes had wonderful warm lights, incredulity was constantly signalled from both eyes and lips. She was a fine, daring little animal, with as great a talent for untruth as truth, though, to this point in her life, truth had been more with her. Her temptations had been few.

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CHAPTER III

MR. FERROL seemed honestly to like the old farmhouse, with its low ceilings, thick walls, big beams and wide chimneys, and he showed himself perfectly at home. He begged to be allowed to sit for an hour in the kitchen, beside the great fireplace. He enjoyed this part of his first appearance greatly. It was like nothing he had tasted since he used, as a boy, to visit the huntsman's home on his father's estate, and gossip and smoke in that Galway chimney-corner. It was only when he had to face the too impressive adoration of Madame Lavilette that his comfort got a twist.

He made easy headway into the affections of his hostess; for, besides all other predilections, she had an adoring awe of the nobility. It rather surprised her that Ferrol seemed almost unaware of his title. He was quite without self-consciousness, although there was that little touch of irresponsibility in him which betrayed a readiness to sell his dignity for a small compensation. With a certain genial capacity for universal blarney, he was at first as impressive with Sophie as he was attentive to Christine. It was quite natural that presently Madame Lavilette should see possibilities beyond all her past imaginations. It would surely advance her ambitions to have him here for Sophie's wedding; but even as she thought that, she had twinges of disappointment, because she had promised Farcinelle to have the wedding as simple and bourgeois as possible.

Farcinelle did not share the social ambitions of the Lavilettes. He liked his political popularity, and he

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was only concerned for that. He had that touch of shrewdness to save him from fatuity where the Lavilettes were concerned. He was determined to associate with the ceremony all the primitive customs of the country. He had come of a race of simple farmers, and he was consistent enough to attempt to live up to the traditions of his people. He was entirely too good-natured to take exception to Ferrol's easy-going admiration of Sophie.

Ferrol spoke excellent French, and soon found points of pleasant contact with Monsieur Lavilette, who, despite the fact that he had coarsened as the years went on, had still upon him the touch of family tradition, which may become either offensive pride or defensive self-respect. With the Curé, Ferrol was not quite so successful. The ascetic, prudent priest, with that instinctive, long-sighted accuracy which belongs to the narrow-minded, scented difficulty. He disliked the English exceedingly; and all Irishmen were Englishmen to him. He resisted Ferrol's blarney. His thin lips tightened, his narrow forehead seemed to grow narrower, and his very cassock appeared to contract austerely on his figure as he talked to the refugee of misfortune.

When the most pardonable of gossips, the Regimental Surgeon, asked him on his way home what he thought of Ferrol, he shrugged his shoulders, tightened his lips again, and said:

"A polite, designing heretic."

The Regimental Surgeon, though a Frenchman, had once belonged to a British battery of artillery stationed at Quebec, and there he had acquired an admiration for the English, which betrayed itself in his curious attempts to imitate Anglo-

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spontaneity. When the Curé had gone, he flung back his shoulders, with a laugh, as he had seen the major-general do at the officers' mess at the citadel, and said in English:

"Heretics are damn' funny. I will go and call. I have also some Irish whiskey. He will like that; and pipes—pipes, plenty of them!"

The pipe he was smoking at the moment had been given to him by the major-general, and he polished the silver ferrule, with its honourable inscription, every morning of his life.

On the morning of the second day after Ferrol came, he was carried off to the Manor Casimbault to see the painful alterations which were being made there under the direction of Madame Lavilette. Sophie, who had a good deal of natural taste, had in the old days fought against her mother's incongruous ideas, and once, when the rehabilitation of the Manor Casimbault came up, she had made a protest; but it was unavailing, and it was her last effort. The Manor Casimbault was destined to be an example of ancient dignity and modern bad taste. Alterations were going on as Madame Lavilette, Ferrol and Christine entered.

For some time Ferrol watched the proceedings with a casual eye, but presently he begged his hostess that she would leave the tall, old oak clock where it was in the big hall, and that the new, platter-faced office clock, intended for its substitute, be hung up in the kitchen. He eyed the well-scraped over-mantel askance and saw, with scarcely concealed astonishment, a fine, old, carved wooden seat carried out of doors to make room for an American rocking-chair. He turned his head away almost in anger when he saw that the beautiful brown wainscoting was being painted an ultra-

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marine blue. His partly disguised astonishment and dissent were not lost upon the crude but clever Christine. A new sense was opened up in her, and she felt somehow that the ultra-marine blue was not right, that the over-mantel had been spoiled, that the new walnut table was too noticeable, and that the American rocking-chair looked very common. Also she felt that the plush, with which her mother and the dressmaker at St. Croix had decorated her bodice, was not the thing.

Presently this made her angry.

"Won't you sit down?" she asked a little maliciously, pointing to the rocking-chair in the salon.

"I prefer standing—with you," he answered, eyeing the chair with a sly twinkle.

"No, that isn't it," she rejoined sharply. "You don't like the chair." Then suddenly breaking into English. "Ah! I know, I know. You can't fool me. I see de leetla look in your eye; and you not like the paint, and you'd pitch that painter, Alcide, out into the snow if it is your house."

"I wouldn't, really," he answered—he coughed a little—"Alcide is doing his work very well. Couldn't you give me a coat of blue paint, too?"

The piquant, intelligent, fiery peasant face interested him. It had warmth, natural life and passion.

She flushed and stamped her foot, while he laughed heartily; and she was about to say something dangerous, when the laugh suddenly stopped and he began coughing. The paroxysm increased until he strained and caught at his breast with his hand. It seemed as if his chest and throat must burst.

She instantly changed. The flush of anger [illegible] from her face, and something else [illegible]

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"Oh! what can I do, what can I do to help you?" she asked pitifully. "I did not know you were so ill. Tell me, what can I do?"

He made a gentle, protesting motion of his free arm —he could not speak yet—while she held and clasped his other hand.

"It's the worst I ever had," he said, after a moment —"the very worst!"

He sat down, and again he had a fit of coughing, and the sweat started out violently upon his forehead and cheek. When his head at last lay back against the chair, the paroxysm over, a little spot of blood showed and spread upon his white lips. With a pained, shuddering little gasp she caught her handkerchief from her bosom, and, running one hand round his shoulder, quickly and gently caught away the spot of blood, and crumpled the handkerchief in her hand to hide it from him.

"Oh! poor fellow, poor fellow!" she said. "Oh! poor fellow!"

Her eyes filled with tears, and she looked at him with that look which is not the love of a woman for a man, or of a lover for a lover, but that latent spirit of care and motherhood which is in every woman who is more woman than man. For there are women who are more men than women.

For himself, a new fact struck home in him. For the first time since his illness he felt that he was doomed. That little spot of blood in the crumpled handkerchief which had flashed past his eye was the fatal message he had sought to elude for months past. A hopeless and ironical misery shot through him. But he had humour too, and, with the taste of the warm red drop in his mouth still, his tongue touched his lips swiftly, and one

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hand grasping the arm of the chair, and the fingers of the other dropping on the back of her hand lightly, he said in a quaint, ironical tone:

"'Dead for a ducat!'"

When he saw the look of horror in her face, his eyes lifted almost gaily to hers, as he continued:

"A little brandy, if you can get it, mademoiselle."

"Yes, yes. I'll get some for you—some whiskey!" she said, with frightened, terribly eager eyes. "Alcide always has some. Don't stir. Sit just where you are."

She ran out of the room swiftly—a light-footed, warm-spirited, dramatic little thing, set off so garishly in the bodice with the plush trimming; but she had a big heart, and the man knew it. It was the big-heartedness which was the touch of the man in her that made her companionable to him.

He said to himself when she left him:

"What cursed luck!" And after a pause, he added: "Good-hearted little body, how sorry she looked!"

Then he settled back in his chair, his eyes fixed upon her as she entered the room, eager, pale and solicitous.

A half-hour later they two were on their way to the farmhouse, the work of despoiling going on in the Manor behind them. Ferrol walked with an easy, half-languid step, even a gay sort of courage in his bearing. The liquor he had drunk brought the colour to his lips. They were now hot and red, and his eyes had a singular feverish brilliancy, in keeping with the hectic flush on his cheek. He had dismissed the subject of his illness almost immediately, and Christine's adaptable nature had instantly responded to his mood.

He asked her questions about the country-side, of

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Two or three times, however, her face suddenly flushed with the memory of the scene in the Manor, and her first real awakening to her social insufficiency; for she of all the family had been least careful to see herself as others might see her. She was vain; she was somewhat of a barbarian; she loved nobody and nobody's opinion as she loved herself and her own opinion. Though, if any people really cared for her, and she for them, they were the Regimental Surgeon and Shangois the notary.

Once, as they walked on, she turned and looked back at the Manor House, but only for an instant. He caught the glance, and said:

"You'll like to live there, won't you?"

"I don't know," she answered almost sharply. "But if the Casimbaults liked it, I don't see why we shouldn't."

There was a challenge in her voice, defiance in the little toss of her head. He liked her spirit in spite of the vanity. Her vanity did not concern him greatly; for, after all, what was he doing here? Merely filling in dark days, living a sober-coloured game out. He had one solitary hundred dollars—no more; and half of that he had borrowed, and half of it he got from selling his shooting-traps and his hunting-watch. He might worry along on that till the end of the game; but he had no money to send his sister in that secluded village two hundred miles away. She had never known how really poor he was; and she had lived in her simple way without want and without any unusual anxiety, save for his health. More than once he had practically starved himself to send money to her. Perhaps also he would have starved others for the same purpose.

"I'll warrant the Casimbaults never enjoyed the Manor as much as I've done that big kitchen in your

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house," he said, "and I can't see why you want to leave it. Don't you feel sorry you are going to leave the old place? Hadn't you got your own little spots there, and made friends with them? I feel as if I should like to sit down by the side of your big, warm chimney-corner, till the wind came along that blows out the candle."

"What do you mean by 'blowing out the candle'?" she asked.

"Well," he answered, "it means, shut up shop, drop the curtain, or anything you like. It means *X Y Z* and the grand *finale!*"

"Oh!" she said, with a little start, as the thing dawned upon her. "Don't speak like that; you're not going to die."

"Give me your handkerchief," he answered. "Give it to me, and I'll tell you—how soon."

She jammed her hand down in her pocket. "No, I won't," she answered. "I won't!"

She never did, and he liked her none the less for that.

Somehow, up to this time, he had always thought that he would get well, and to-morrow he would probably think so again; but just for the moment he felt the real truth.

Presently she said (they spoke in French):

"Why is it you like our old kitchen so much? It isn't nearly as nice as the parlour."

"Well, it's a place to live in, anyhow; and I fancy you all feel more at home there than anywhere else."

"I feel just as much at home in the parlour as there," she retorted.

"Oh, no, I think not. The room one lives in the most is the room for any one's money."

She looked at him in a puzzled way. Too many sen-

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sations were being born in her all at once; but she did recognise that he was not trying to subtract anything from the pomp of the Lavilettes.

He belonged to a world that she did not know—and yet he was so perfectly at home with her, so idly easy-going.

"Did you ever live in a castle?" she asked eagerly.

"Yes," he said, with a dry little laugh. Then, after a moment, with the half-abstracted manner of a man who is recalling a long-forgotten scene, he added: "I lived in the North Tower, looking out on Farcalladen Moor. When I wasn't riding to the hounds myself I could see them crossing to or from the meet. The River Stavely ran between; and just under the window of the North Tower is the prettiest copse you ever saw. That was from one side of the tower. From the other side you looked into the court-yard. As a boy, I liked the court-yard just as well as the moor; for the pigeons, the sparrows, the horses and the dogs were all there. As a man, I liked the moor better. Well, I had jolly good times in Castle Stavely—once upon a time."

"Yet, you like our kitchen!" she again urged, in a maze of wonderment.

"I like everything here," he answered; "everything—everything, you understand!" he said, looking meaningly into her eyes.

"Then you'll like the wedding—Sophie's wedding," she answered, in a little confusion.

A half-hour later, he said much the same sort of thing to Sophie, with the same look in his eyes, and only the general purpose, in either case, of being on easy terms with them.

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CHAPTER IV

THE day of the wedding there was a gay procession through the parish of the friends and constituents of Magon Farcinelle. When they came to his home he joined them, and marched at the head of the procession as had done many a forefather of his, with ribbons on his hat and others at his button-hole. After stopping for exchange of courtesies at several houses in the parish, the procession came to the homestead of the Lavilettes, and the crowd were now enough excited to forget the pride which had repelled and offended them for many years.

Monsieur Lavilette made a polite speech, sending round cider and "white wine" (as native whiskey was called) when he had finished. Later, Nicolas furnished some good brandy, and Farcinelle sent more. A good number of people had come out of curiosity to see what manner of man the Englishman was, well prepared to resent his overbearing snobbishness—they were inclined to believe every Englishman snobbish. But Ferrol was so entirely affable, and he drank so freely with everyone that came to say "*À votre santé, M'sieu' le Baron,*" and kept such a steady head in spite of all those quantities of white wine, brandy and cider, that they were almost ready to carry him on their shoulders; though, with their racial prejudice, they would probably have repented of that indiscretion on the morrow.

Presently, dancing began in a paddock just across the road from the house; and when Madame Lavilette

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saw that Mr. Ferrol gave such undisguised countenance to the primitive rejoicings, she encouraged the revellers and enlarged her hospitality, sending down hampers of eatables. She preened with pleasure when she saw Ferrol walking up and down in very confidential conversation with Christine. If she had been really observant she would have seen that Ferrol's tendency was towards an appearance of confidential friendliness with almost everybody. Great ideas had entered Madame's head, but they were vaguely defining themselves in Christine's mind also. Where might not this friendship with Ferrol lead her?

Something occurred in the midst of the dancing which gave a new turn to affairs. In one of the pauses a song came monotonously lilting down the street; yet it was not a song, it was only a sort of humming or chanting. Immediately there was a clapping of hands, a flutter of female voices, and delighted exclamations of children.

"Oh, it's a dancing bear, it's a dancing bear!" they cried.

"Is it Pito?" asked one.

"Is it Adrienne?" cried another.

"But no; I'll bet it's Victor!" exclaimed a third.

As the man and the bear came nearer, they saw it was neither of these. The man's voice was not unpleasant; it had a rolling, crooning sort of sound, a little weird, as though he had lived where men see few of their kind and have much to do with animals.

He was bearded, but young; his hair grew low on his forehead, and, although it was summer time, a fur cap was set far back, like a fez, upon his black curly hair. His forehead was corrugated, like that of a man of sixty who had lived a hard life; his eyes were small,

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black and piercing. He wore a thick, short coat, a red sash about his waist, a blue flannel shirt, and a loose red scarf, like a handkerchief, at his throat. His feet were bare, and his trousers were rolled half way up to his knee. In one hand he carried a short pole with a steel pike in it, in the other a rope fastened to a ring in the bear's nose.

The bear, a huge brown animal, upright on his hind legs, was dancing sideways along the road, keeping time to the lazy notes of his leader's voice.

In front of the Hotel France they halted, and the bear danced round and round in a ring, his eyes rolling savagely, his head shaking from side to side in a bad-tempered way.

Suddenly some one cried out: "It's Vanne Castine! It's Vanne!"

People crowded nearer: there was a flurry of exclamations, and then Christine took a few steps forward where she could see the man's face, and as swiftly drew back into the crowd, pale and *distraite*.

The man watched her until she drew away behind a group, which was composed of Ferrol, her brother and her sister Sophie. He dropped no note of his song, and the bear kept jigging on. Children and elders threw coppers, which he picked up, with a little nod of his head, a malicious sort of smile on his lips. He kept a vigilant eye on the bear, however, and his pole was pointed constantly towards it. After about five minutes of this entertainment he moved along up the road. He spoke no word to anybody though there were some cries of greeting, but passed on, still singing the monotonous song, followed by a crowd of children. Presently he turned a corner, and was lost to sight. For a moment longer the lullaby floated across the garden and

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the green fields, then the cornet and the concertina began again, and Ferrol turned towards Christine.

He had seen her paleness and her look of consternation, had observed the sulky, penetrating look of the bear-leader's eye, and he knew that he was stumbling upon a story. Her eye met his, then swiftly turned away. When her look came to his face again it was filled with defiant laughter, and a hot brilliancy showed where the paleness had been.

"Will you dance with me?" Ferrol asked.

"Dance with you here?" she responded incredulously.

"Yes, just here," he said, with a dry little laugh, as he ran his arm round her waist and drew her out upon the green.

"And who is Vanne Castine?" he asked as they swung away in time with the music.

The rest stopped dancing when they saw these two appear in the ring—through curiosity or through courtesy.

She did not answer immediately. They danced a little longer, then he said:

"An old friend, eh?"

After a moment, with a masked defiance still, and a hard laugh, she answered in English, though his question had been in French:

"De frien' of an ol' frien'."

"You seem to be strangers now," he suggested.

She did not answer at all, but suddenly stopped dancing, saying: "I'm tired."

The dance went on without them. Sophie and Farcinelle presently withdrew also. In five minutes the crowd had scattered, and the Lavilettes and Mr. Ferrol returned to the house.

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Meanwhile, as they passed up the street, the droning, vibrating voice of the bear-leader came floating along the air and through the voices of the crowd like the thread of motive in the movement of an opera.

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CHAPTER V

THAT night, while gaiety and feasting went on at the Lavilettes', there was another sort of feasting under way at the house of Shangois, the notary.

On one side of a tiny fire in the chimney, over which hung a little black kettle, sat Shangois and Vanne Castine. Castine was blowing clouds of smoke from his pipe, and Shangois was pouring some tea leaves into a little tin pot, humming to himself snatches of an old song as he did so:

"What shall we do when the King comes home?
What shall we do when he rides along
With his slaves of Greece and his serfs of Rome?
What shall we sing for a song—
When the King comes home?

"What shall we do when the King comes home?
What shall we do when he speaks so fair?
Shall we give him the house with the silver dome
And the maid with the crimson hair—
When the King comes home?"

A long, heavy sigh filled the room, but it was not the breath of Vanne Castine. The sound came from the corner where the huge brown bear huddled in savage ease. When it stirred, as if in response to Shangois's song, the chains rattled. He was fastened by two chains to a staple driven into the foundation timbers of the house. Castine's bear might easily be allowed too much liberty!

Once he had killed a man in the open street of the

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City of Quebec, and once also he had nearly killed Castine. They had had a fight and struggle, out of which the man came with a lacerated chest; but since that time he had become the master of the bear. It feared him; yet, as he travelled with it, he scarcely ever took his eyes off it, and he never trusted it. That was why, although Michael was always near him, sleeping or waking, he kept him chained at night.

As Shangois sang, Castine's brow knotted and twitched and his hand clinched on his pipe with a sudden ferocity.

"Name of a black cat, what do you sing that song for, notary?" he broke out peevishly. "Nose of a little god, are you making fun of me?"

Shangois handed him some tea. "There's no one to laugh—why should I make fun of you?" he asked, jeeringly, in English, for his English was almost as good as his French, save in the turn of certain idioms. "Come, my little punchinello, tell me, now, why have you come back?"

Castine laughed bitterly.

"Ha, ha, why do I come back? I'll tell you." He sucked at his pipe. "Bon'venture is a good place to come to—yes. I have been to Quebec, to St. John, to Fort Garry, to Detroit, up in Maine and down to New York. I have ride a horse in a circus, I have drive a horse and sleigh in a shanty, I have play in a brass band, I have drink whiskey every night for a month—enough whiskey. I have drink water every night for a year—it is not enough. I have learn how to speak English; I have lose all my money when I go to play a game of cards. I go back to de circus; de circus smash; I have no pay. I take dat damn bear Michael as my share—yes. I walk t'rough de State of New

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York, all t'rough de State of Maine to Quebec, all de leetla village, all de big city—yes. I learn dat damn funny song to sing to Michael. Ha, why do I come to Bon'venture? What is there to Bon'venture? Ha! you ask that? I know and you know, M'sieu' Shangois. There is nosing like Bon'venture in all de worl'.

"What is it you would have? Do you want nice warm house in winter, plenty pork, molass', patat, leetla drop whiskey 'hind de door in de morning? Ha! you come to Bon'venture. Where else you fin' it? You want people say: 'How you do, Vanne Castine—how you are? Adieu, Vanne Castine; to see you again ver' happy, Vanne Castine.' Ha, that is what you get in Bon'venture. Who say 'God bless you' in New York! They say 'Damn you!'—yes, I know.

"Where have you a church so warm, so ver' nice, and everybody say him mass and God-have-mercy? Where you fin' it like that leetla place on de hill in Bon'venture? Yes. There is anoser place in Bon'-venture, ver' nice place—yes, ha! On de side of de hill. You have small-pox, scarlet fev', difthere; you get smash your head, you get break your leg, you fall down, you go to die. Ha, who is there in all de worl' like M'sieu' Vallier, the Curé? Who will say to you like him: 'Vanne Castine, you have break all de command-ments: you have swear, you have steal, you have kill, you have drink. Ver' well, now, you will be sorry for dat, and say your prayer. Perhaps, after hunder fifty tousen' years of purgator', you will be forgive and go to Heaven. But first, when you die, we will put you way down in de leetla warm house in de ground, on de side of de hill, in de Parish of Bon'venture, because it is de only place for a gipsy like Vanne Castine.'

"You ask me—ah! I see you look at me, M'sieu' le

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Notaire, you look at me like a leetla dev'. You t'ink I come for somet'ing else"—his black eyes flashed under his brow, he shook his head, and his hands clinched—"You ask me why I come back? I come back because there is one thing I care for mos' in all de worl'. You t'ink I am happy to go about with a damn brown bear and dance t'rough de village? *Moi?*—no, no, no! What a Jack I look when I sing—ah, that fool's song all down de street! I come back for one thing only, M'sieu' Shangois.

"You know that night—ah, four, five years ago? You remember, M'sieu' Shangois? Ah! she was so beautiful, so sweet; her hair it fall down about her face, her eyes all black, her cheeks like the snow, her lips, her lips!—You rememb' her father curse me, tell me to go. Why? Because I have kill a man! *Eh bien*, what if I kill a man! He would have kill me: I do it to save myself. I say I am not guilty; but her father say I am a sc'undrel, and turn me out de house. De girl, Christine, she love me. Yes, she love Vanne Castine. She say to me, 'I will go with you. Go anywhere, and I will go!'

"It is night and it is all dark. I wait at de place, an' she come. We start to walk to Montreal. Ah! dat night, it is like fire in my heart. Well, a great storm come down, and we have to come back. We come to your house here, light a fire, and sit just in de spot where I am, one hour, two hour, three hour. *Saprie*, how I love her! She is in me like fire, like de wind and de sea. Well, I am happy like no other man. I sit here and look at her, and t'ink of to-morrow—*for ever*. She look at me; oh, de love of God, she look at me! So I kneel down on de floor here beside her and say, 'Who shall take you from ...

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She look at me and say: 'Who shall take you from me, my big Vanne?'

"All at once the door open, and—"

"And a little black notary take her from you," said Shangois, dryly, and with a touch of malice also.

"You, yes, you lawyer dev', you take her from me! You say to her it is wicked. You tell her how her father will weep and her mother's heart will break. You tell her how she will be ashame', and a curse will fall on her. Then she begin to cry, for she is afraid. Ah, where is de wrong? I love her; I would go to marry her—but no, what is that to you! She turn on me and say, 'I will go back to my father.' And she go back. After that I try to see her; but she will not see me. Then I go away, and I am gone five years; yes."

Shangois came over, and with his thin beautiful hand (for despite the ill-kept finger nails, it was the one fine feature of his body—long, shapely, artistic) tapped Castine's knee.

"I did right to save Christine. She hates you now. If she had gone with you that night, do you suppose she would have been happy as your wife? No, she is not for Vanne Castine."

Suddenly Shangois's manner changed; he laid his hand upon the other's shoulder.

"My poor, wicked, good-for-nothing Vanne Castine, Christine Lavilette was not made for you. You are a poor *vaurien*, always a poor *vaurien*. I knew your father and your two grandfathers. They were all *vauriens;* all as handsome as you can think, and all died, not in their beds. Your grandfather killed a man, your father drank and killed a man. Your grandfather drove his wife to her grave, your father broke your mother's heart. Why should you break the heart of

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any girl in the world." Leave her alone. Is it love to a woman when you break all the commandments, and shame her and bring her down to where you are—a bad *sauvien*? When a man loves a woman with the true love, he will try to do good for her sake. Go back to that crazy New York—it is the place for you. Ma'm'selle Christine is not for you."

"Who is she for, m'sieu' le Jew?"

"Perhaps for the English Irishman," answered Shangois, in a low suggestive tone, as he dropped a little brandy in his tea with light fingers.

"Ah, sacré! we shall see. There is *sauvien* in her too," was the half-triumphant reply.

"There is more woman," retorted Shangois; "much more."

"We'll see about that, m'sieu'!" exclaimed Castine, as he turned towards the bear, which was clawing at his chain.

An hour later, a scene quite as important occurred at Lavilette's great farmhouse.

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CHAPTER VI

It was about ten o'clock. Lights were burning in every window. At a table in the dining-room sat Monsieur and Madame Lavilette, the father of Magon Farcinelle, and Shangois, the notary. The marriage contract was before them. They had reached a point of difficulty. Farcinelle was stipulating for five acres of river-land as another item in Sophie's dot.

The corners tightened around Madame's mouth. Lavilette scratched his head, so that the hair stood up like flying tassels of corn. The land in question lay next a portion of Farcinelle's own farm, with a river frontage. On it was a little house and shed, and no better garden-stuff grew in the parish than on this same five acres.

"But I do not own the land," said Lavilette.

"You've got a mortgage on it," answered Farcinelle. "Foreclose it."

"Suppose I did foreclose; you couldn't put the land in the marriage contract until it was mine."

The notary shrugged his shoulder ironically, and dropped his chin in his hand as he furtively eyed the two men. Farcinelle was ready for the emergency. He turned to Shangois.

"I've got everything ready for the foreclosure," said he. "Couldn't it be done to-night, Shangois?"

"Hardly to-night. You might foreclose, but the property couldn't be Monsieur Lavilette's until it is duly sold under the mortgage."

"Here, I'll tell you what can be done," said Farci-

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nelle. "You can put the mortgage in the contract as her dot, and, name of a little man! I'll foreclose it, I can tell you. Come, now, Lavilette, is it a bargain?"

Shangois sat back in his chair, the fingers of both hands drumming on the table before him, his head twisted a little to one side. His little reflective eyes sparkled with malicious interest, and his little voice said, as though he were speaking to himself:

"Excuse, but the land belongs to the young Vanne Castine—eh?"

"That's it," exclaimed Farcinelle.

"Well, why not give the poor *vaurien* a chance to take up the mortgage?"

"Why, he hasn't paid the interest in five years!" said Lavilette.

"But—ah—you have had the use of the land, I think, monsieur. That should meet the interest."

Lavilette scowled a little; Farcinelle grunted and laughed.

"How can I give him a chance to pay the mortgage?" said Lavilette. "He never had a penny. Besides, he hasn't been seen for five years."

A faint smile passed over Shangois's face.

"Yesterday," he said, "he had not been seen for five years, but to-day he is in Bonaventure."

"The devil!" said Lavilette, dropping a fist on the table, and staring at the notary; for he was not present in the afternoon when Castine passed by.

"What difference does that make?" snarled Farcinelle. "I'll bet he's got nothing more than what he went away with, and that wasn't a sou markee!"

A provoking smile flickered at the corners of Shangois's mouth, and he said, with a dry inflection, as he dipped and redipped his quill pen in the inkhorn:

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"He has a bear, my friends, which dances very well."

Farcinelle guffawed. "St. Mary!" said he, slapping his leg, "we'll have the bear at the wedding, and I'll have that farm of Vanne Castine's. What does he want of a farm? He's got a bear. Come, is it a bargain? Am I to have the mortgage? If you don't stick it in, I'll not let my boy marry your girl, Lavilette. There, now, that's my last word."

"'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, nor his wife, nor his maid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his,'" said the notary, abstractedly, drawing the picture of a fat Jew on the paper before him.

The irony was lost upon his hearers. Madame Lavilette had been thinking, however, and she saw further than her husband.

"It amounts to the same thing," she said. "You see it doesn't go away from Sophie; so let him have it, Louis."

"All right," responded monsieur at last, "Sophie gets the acres and the house in her dot."

"You won't give young Vanne Castine a chance?" asked the notary. "The mortgage is for four hundred dollars and the place is worth seven hundred!"

No one replied. "Very well, my Israelites," added Shangois, bending over the contract.

An hour later, Nicolas Lavilette was in the big storeroom of the farmhouse, which was reached by a covered passage from the hall between the kitchen and the dining-room. In his off-hand way he was getting out some flour, dried fruit and preserves for the cook, who stood near as he loaded up her arms. He laughingly thrust a string of green peppers under her chin, and added a couple of sprigs of summer-savoury, then sud-

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denly turned round, with a start, for a peculiar low whistle came to him through the half-open window. It was followed by heavy stertorous breathing.

He turned back again to the cook, gaily took her by the shoulders, and pushed her to the door. Closing it behind her, he shot the bolt and ran back to the window. As he did so, a hand appeared on the window-sill, and a face followed the hand.

"Ha! Nicolas Lavilette, is that you? So, you know my leetla whistle again!"

Nicolas's brow darkened. In old days he and this same Vanne Castine had been in many a scrape together, and Vanne, the elder, had always borne the responsibility of their adventures. Nicolas had had enough of those old days; other ambitions and habits governed him now. He was not exactly the man to go back on a friend, but Castine no longer had any particular claims to friendship. The last time he had heard Vanne's whistle was a night five years before, when they both joined a gang of river-drivers, and made a raid on some sham American speculators and surveyors and labourers, who were exploiting an oil-well on the property of the old seigneur. The two had come out of the *mêlée* with bruised heads, and Vanne with a bullet in his calf. But soon afterwards came Christine's elopement with Vanne, of which no one knew save her father, Nicolas, Shangois and Vanne himself. That ended their compact, and, after a bitter quarrel, they had parted and had never met nor seen each other till this very afternoon.

"Yes, I know your whistle all right," answered Nicolas, with a twist of the shoulder.

"Aren't you going to shake hands?" asked Castine, with a sort of sneer on his face.

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Nicolas thrust his hands down in his pockets. "I'm not so glad to see you as all that," he answered, with a contemptuous laugh.

The black eyes of the bear-leader were alive with anger.

"You're a damn' fool, Nic Lavilette. You think because I lead a bear—eh? Pshaw! you shall see. I am nothing, eh? I am to walk on! Nic Lavilette, once he steal the Curé's pig and—"

"See you there, Castine, I've had enough of that," was the half-angry, half-amused interruption. "What are you after here?"

"What was I after five years ago?" was the meaning reply.

Lavilette's face suddenly flushed with fury. He gripped the window with both hands, and made as if he would leap out; but beside Castine's face there appeared another, with glaring eyes, red tongue, white vicious teeth, and two huge claws which dropped on the ledge of the window in much the same way as did Lavilette's.

There was a moment's silence as the man and the beast looked at each other, and then Castine began laughing in a low, sneering sort of way.

"I'll shoot the beast, and I'll break your neck if ever I see you on this farm again," said Lavilette, with wild anger.

"Break my neck—that's all right; but shoot this leetla Michael! When you do that you will not have to wait for a British bullet to kill you. I will do it with a knife—just where you can hear it sing under your ear!"

"British bullet!" said Lavilette, excitedly; "what about a British bullet—eh—what?"

"Only that the Rebellion's coming quick now," an-

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swered Castine, his manner changing, and a look of cunning crossing his face. "You've given your name to the great Papineau, and I am here, as you see."

"You—you—what have you got to do with the Revolution? with Papineau?"

"Pah! do you think a Lavilette is the only patriot! Papineau is my friend, and—"

"Your friend—"

"My friend. I am carrying his message all through the parishes. Bon'venture is the last—almost. The great General Papineau sends you a word, Nic Lavilette —here."

He drew from his pocket a letter and handed it over. Lavilette tore it open. It was a captain's commission for M. Nicolas Lavilette, with a call for money and a company of men and horses.

"Maybe there's a leetla noose hanging from the tail of that, but then—it is the glory—eh? Captain Lavilette—eh?" There was covert malice in Castine's voice. "If the English whip us, they won't shoot us like grand seigneurs, they will hang us like dogs."

Lavilette scarcely noticed the sneer. He was seeing visions of a captain's sword and epaulettes, and planning to get men, money and horses together—for this matter had been brooding for nearly a year, and he had been the active leader in Bonaventure.

"We've been near a hundred years, we Frenchmen, eating dirt in the country we owned from the start; and I'd rather die fighting to get back the old citadel than live with the English heel on my nose," said Lavilette, with a play-acting attempt at oratory.

"Yes, an' dey call us Johnny Pea-soups," said Castine, with a furtive grin. "An' perhaps that British Colborne will hang us to our barn doors—eh?"

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There was silence for a moment, in which Lavilette read the letter over again with gloating eyes. Presently Castine started and looked round.

"What's that?" he said in a whisper.

"I heard nothing."

"I heard the feet of a man—yes."

They both stood moveless, listening. There was no sound; but, at the same time, the Hon. Mr. Ferrol had the secret of the Rebellion in his hands.

A moment later Castine and his bear were out in the road. Lavilette leaned out of the window and mused.

Castine's words of a few moments before came to him:

"That British Colborne will hang us to our barn doors —eh?"

He shuddered, and struck a light.

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CHAPTER VII

Mr. Ferrol slept in the large guest-chamber of the house. Above it was Christine's bedroom. Thick as were the timbers and boards of the floor, Christine could hear one sound, painfully monotonous and frequent, coming from his room the whole night—the hacking, rending cough which she had heard so often since he came. The fear of Vanne Castine, the memories of the wild, half animal-like love she had had for him in the old days, the excitement of the new events which had come into her life; these kept her awake, and she tossed and turned in feverish unrest. All that had happened since Ferrol had arrived, every word that he had spoken, every motion that he had made, every look of his face, she recalled vividly. All that he was, which was different from the people she had known, she magnified, so that to her he had a distant, overwhelming sort of grandeur. She beat the bedclothes in her restlessness. Suddenly she sat up straight in bed.

"Oh, if I hadn't been a Lavilette! If I'd only been born and brought up with the sort of people he comes from, I'd not have been ashamed of myself or him of me."

The plush bodice she had worn that day danced before her eyes. She knew how horribly ugly it was. Her fingers ran over the patchwork quilt on her bed; and although she could not see it, she loathed it, because she knew it was a painful mess of colours. With a little touch of dramatic extravagance, she leaned over and down, and drew her fingers contemptuously along the

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rag-carpet on the floor. Then she cried a little hysterically:

"He never saw anything like that before. How he must laugh as he sits there in that room!"

As if in reply, the hacking cough came faintly through the time-worn floor.

"That cough's going to kill him, to kill him," she said.

Then, with a little start and with a sort of cry, which she stopped by putting both hands over her mouth, she said to herself, brokenly:

"Why shouldn't he—why shouldn't he love me! I could take care of him; I could nurse him; I could wait on him; I could be better to him than any one else in the world. And it wouldn't make any difference to him at all in the end. He's going to die before long—I know it. Well, what does it matter what becomes of me afterwards? I should have had him; I should have loved him; he should have been mine for a little while anyway. I'd be good to him; oh, I'd be good to him! Who else is there? He'll get worse and worse; and what will any of the fine ladies do for him then, I'd like to know. Why aren't they here? Why isn't he with them? He's poor—Nic says so—and they're rich. Why don't they help him? I would. I'd give him my last penny and the last drop of blood in my heart. What do they know about love?"

Her little teeth clinched, she shook her brown hair back in a sort of fury.

"What do they know about love? What would they do for it? I'd have my fingers chopped off one by one for it. I'd break every one of the ten commandments for it. I'd lose my soul for it.

"I've got twenty times as much heart as any one

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of them, I don't care who they are. I'd lie for him; I'd steal for him; I'd kill for him. I'd watch everything that he says, and I'd say it as he says it. I'd be angry when he was angry, miserable when he was miserable, happy when he was happy. Vanne Castine—what was he! What was it that made me care for him then? And now—now he travels with a bear, and they toss coppers to him; a beggar, a tramp—a dirty, lazy tramp! He hates me, I know—or else he loves me, and that's worse. And I'm afraid of him; I know I'm afraid of him. Oh, how will it all end? I know there's going to be trouble. I could see it in Vanne's face. But I don't care, I don't care, if Mr. Ferrol—"

The cough came droning through the floor.

"If he'd only—ah! I'd do anything for him, anything; anybody would. I saw Sophie look at him as she never looked at Magon. If she did—if she dared to care for him—"

All at once she shivered as if with shame and fright, drew the bedclothes about her head, and burst into a fit of weeping. When it passed, she lay still and nerveless between the coarse sheets, and sank into a deep sleep just as the dawn crept through the cracks of the blind.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE weeks went by. Sophie had become the wife of the member for the country, and had instantly settled down to a quiet life. This was disconcerting to Madame Lavilette, who had hoped that out of Farcinelle's official position she might reap some praise and pence of ambition. Meanwhile, Ferrol became more and more a cherished and important figure in the Manor Casimbault, where the Lavilettes had made their home soon after the wedding. The old farmhouse had also secretly become a rendezvous for the mysterious Nicolas Lavilette and his rebel comrades. This was known to Mr. Ferrol. One evening he stopped Nic as he was leaving the house, and said:

"See, Nic, my boy, what's up? I know a thing or so —what's the use of playing peek-a-boo?"

"What do you know, Ferrol?"

"What's between you and Vanne Castine, for instance. Come, now, own up and tell me all about it. I'm British; but I'm Nic Lavilette's friend anyhow."

He insinuated into his tone that little touch of brogue which he used when particularly persuasive. Nic put out his hand with a burst of good-natured frankness.

"Meet me in the store-room of the old farmhouse at nine o'clock, and I'll tell you. Here's a key."

Handing over the key, he grasped Ferrol's hand with an effusive confidence, and hurried out. Nic Lavilette was now an important person in his own sight and in the sight of others in Bonaventure. In him the pomp of his family took an individual form.

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Earlier than the appointed time, Ferrol turned the key and stepped inside the big despoiled hallway of the old farmhouse. His footsteps sounded hollow in the empty rooms. Already dust had gathered, and an air of desertion and decay filled the place in spite of the solid timbers and sound floors and window-sills. He took out his watch; it was ten minutes to nine. Passing through the little hallway to the store-room, he opened the door. It was dark inside. Striking a match, he saw a candle on the window-sill, and, going to it, he lighted it with a flint and steel lying near. The window was shut tight. From curiosity only he tried to open the shutter, but it was immovable. Looking round, he saw another candle on the window-sill opposite. He lighted it also, and mechanically tried to force the shutters of the window, but they were tight also.

Going to the door, which opened into the farmyard, he found it securely fastened. Although he turned the lock, the door would not open.

Presently his attention was drawn by the glitter of something upon one of the crosspieces of timber halfway up the wall. Going over, he examined it, and found it to be a broken bayonet—left there by a careless rebel. Placing the steel again upon the ledge, he began walking up and down thoughtfully.

Presently he was seized with a fit of coughing. The paroxysm lasted a minute or more, and he placed his arm upon the window-sill, leaning his head upon it. Presently, as the paroxysm lessened, he thought he heard the click of a lock. He raised his head, but his eyes were misty, and, seeing nothing, he leaned his head on his arm again.

Suddenly he felt something near him. He swung round swiftly, and saw Vanne Castine's bear not fifteen

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feet away from him! It raised itself on its hind legs, its red eyes rolling, and started towards him. He picked up the candle from the window-sill, threw it in the animal's face, and dashed towards the door.

It was locked. He swung round. The huge beast, with a loud snarl, was coming down upon him.

Here he was, shut within four solid walls, with a wild beast hungry for his life. All his instincts were alive. He had little hope of saving himself, but he was determined to do what lay in his power.

His first impulse was to blow out the other candle. That would leave him in the dark, and it struck him that his advantage would be greater if there were no light. He came straight towards the bear, then suddenly made a swift movement to the left, trusting to his greater quickness of movement. The beast was nearly as quick as he, and as he dashed along the wall towards the candle, he could hear its breath just behind him.

As he passed the window, he caught the candle in his hands, and was about to throw it on the floor or in the bear's face, when he remembered that, in the dark, the bear's sense of smell would be as effective as eyesight, while he himself would be no better off.

He ran suddenly to the centre of the room, the candle still in his hand, and turned to meet his foe. It came savagely at him. He dodged, ran past it, turned, doubled on it, and dodged again. A half-dozen times this was repeated, the candle still flaring. It could not last long. The bear was enraged. Its movements became swifter, its vicious teeth and lips were covered with froth, which dripped to the floor, and sometimes spattered Ferrol's clothes as he ran past. No matador ever played with the horns of a mad bull as Ferrol played his deadly game with Michael, the dancing

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bear. His breath was becoming shorter and shorter; he had a stifling sensation, a terrible tightness across his chest. He did not cough, however, but once or twice he tasted warm drops of his heart's blood in his mouth. Once he drew the back of his hand across his lips mechanically, and a red stain showed upon it.

In his boyhood and early manhood he had been a good sportsman; had been quick of eye, swift of foot, and fearless. But what could fearlessness avail him in this strait? With the best of rifles he would have felt himself at a disadvantage. He was certain his time had come; and with that conviction upon him, the terror of the thing and the horrible physical shrinking almost passed away from him. The disease, eating away his life, had diminished that revolt against death which is in the healthy flesh of every man. He was levying upon the vital forces remaining in him, which, distributed naturally, might cover a year or so, to give him here and now a few moments of unnatural strength for the completion of a hopeless struggle.

It was also as if two brains in him were working: one busy with all the chances and details of his wild contest, the other with the events of his life.

Pictures flashed before him. Some having to do with the earliest days of his childhood; some with fighting on the Danube, before he left the army, impoverished and ashamed; some with idle hours in the North Tower in Stavely Castle; and one with the day he and his sister left the old castle, never to return, and looked back upon it from the top of Farcalladen Moor, waving a "God bless you" to it. The thought of his sister filled him with a desire, a pitiful desire to live.

Just then another picture flashed before his eyes. It was he himself, riding the mad stallion, Bolingbroke, the

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first year he followed the hounds: how the brute tried to smash his leg against a stone wall; how it reared until it almost toppled over and backwards; how it jibbed at a gate, and nearly dashed its own brains out against a tree; and how, after an hour's hard fighting, he made it take the stiffest fence and water-course in the county.

This thought gave him courage now. He suddenly remembered the broken bayonet upon the ledge against the wall. If he could reach it there might be a chance —chance to strike one blow for life. As his eye glanced towards the wall he saw the steel flash in the light of the candle.

The bear was between him and it. He made a feint towards the left, then as quickly to the right. But doing so, he slipped and fell. The candle dropped to the floor and went out. With a lightning-like instinct of self-preservation he swung over upon his face just as the bear, in its wild rush, passed over his head. He remembered afterwards the odour of the hot, rank body, and the sprawling huge feet and claws. Scrambling to his feet swiftly, he ran to the wall. Fortune was with him. His hand almost instantly clutched the broken bayonet. He whipped out his handkerchief, tore the scarf from his neck, and wound them around his hand, that the broken bayonet should not tear the flesh as he fought for his life; then, seizing it, he stood waiting for the bear to come on. His body was bent forwards, his eyes straining into the dark, his hot face dripping, dripping sweat, his breath coming hard and laboured from his throat.

For a minute there was absolute silence, save for the breathing of the man and the savage panting of the beast. Presently he felt exactly where the bear was,

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and listened intently. He knew that it was now but a question of minutes, perhaps seconds. Suddenly it occurred to him that if he could but climb upon the ledge where the bayonet had been, there might be safety. Yet again, in getting up, the bear might seize him, and there would be an end to all immediately. It was worth trying, however.

Two things happened at that moment to prevent the trial: the sound of knocking on a door somewhere, and the roaring rush of the bear upon him. He sprang to one side, striking at the beast as he did so. The bayonet went in and out again. There came voices from the outside; evidently somebody was trying to get in. The bear roared again and came on. It was all a blind man's game. But his scent, like the animal's, was keen. He had taken off his coat, and he now swung it out before him in a half-circle, and as it struck the bear it covered his own position. He swung aside once more and drove his arm into the dark. The bayonet struck the nose of the beast.

Now there was a knocking and a hammering at the window, and the wrenching of the shutters. He gathered himself together for the next assault. Suddenly he felt that every particle of strength had gone out of him. He pulled himself up with a last effort. His legs would not support him; he shivered and swayed. God, would they never get that window open!

His senses were abnormally acute. Another sound attracted him: the opening of the door, and a voice—Vanne Castine's—calling to the bear.

His heart seemed to give a leap, then slowly to roll over with a thud, and he fell to the floor as the bear lunged forwards upon him.

A minute afterwards Vanne Castine was goading the

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savage beast through the door and out to the hallway into the yard as Nic swung through the open window into the room.

Castine's lantern stood in the middle of the floor, and between it and the window lay Ferrol, the broken bayonet still clutched in his right hand. Lavilette dropped on his knees beside him and felt his heart. It was beating, but the shirt and the waistcoat were dripping with blood where the bear had set its claws and teeth in the shoulder of its victim.

An hour later Nic Lavilette stood outside the door of Ferrol's bedroom in the Manor Casimbault, talking to the Regimental Surgeon, as Christine, pale and wild-eyed, came running towards them.

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CHAPTER IX

"Is he dead? is he dead?" she asked distractedly. "I've just come from the village. Why didn't you send for me? Tell me, is he dead? Oh, tell me at once!"

She caught the Regimental Surgeon's arm. He looked down at her, over his glasses, benignly, for she had always been a favourite of his, and answered:

"Alive, alive, my dear. Bad rip in the shoulder—worn out—weak—shattered—but good for a while yet—yes, yes—*certainement!*"

With a wayward impulse, she threw her arms around his neck and kissed him on the cheek. The embrace disarranged his glasses and flushed his face like a schoolgirl's, but his eyes were full of embarrassed delight.

"There, there," he said, "we'll take care of him—!" Then suddenly he paused, for the real significance of her action dawned upon him.

"Dear me," he said in disturbed meditation; "dear me!"

She suddenly opened the bedroom door and went in, followed by Nic. The Regimental Surgeon dropped his mouth and cheeks in his hand reflectively, his eyes showing quaintly and quizzically above the glasses and his fingers.

"Well, well! Well, well!" he said, as if he had encountered a difficulty. "It—it will never be possible. He would not marry her," he added, and then, turning, went abstractedly down the stairs.

Ferrol was in a deep sleep when Christine and her

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brother entered the chamber. Her face turned still more pale when she saw him, flushed, and became pale again. There were leaden hollows round his eyes, and his hair was matted with perspiration. Yet he was handsome—and helpless. Her eyes filled with tears. She turned her head away from her brother and went softly to the window, but not before she had touched the pale hand that lay nerveless upon the coverlet.

"It's not feverish," she said to Nic, as if in necessary explanation of the act.

She stood at the window for a moment, looking out, then said:

"Come here, Nic, and tell me all about it."

He told her all he knew: how he had come to the old house by appointment with Ferrol; had tried to get into the store-room; had found the doors bolted; had heard the noise of a wild animal inside; had run out, tried a window, at last wrenched it open and found Ferrol in a dead faint. He went to the table and brought back the broken bayonet.

"That's all he had to fight with," he said. "Fire of a little hell, but he had grit—after all!"

"That's all he had to fight with!" she repeated, as she untwisted the handkerchief from the hilt end. "Why did you say he had true grit—'after all'? What do you mean by that 'after all'?"

"Well, you don't expect much from a man with only one lung—eh?"

"Courage isn't in the lungs," she answered. Then she added: "Go and fetch me a bottle of brandy—I'm going to bathe his hands and feet in brandy and hot water as soon as he's awake."

"Better let mother do that, hadn't you?" he asked rather hesitatingly, as he moved towards the door.

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Her eyes snapped fire. "Nic—*mon Dieu*, hear the nice Nic!" she said. "The dear Nic, who went in swimming with—"

She said no more, for he had no desire to listen to an account of his misdeeds,—which were not a few,—and Christine had a galling tongue.

When the door was shut she went to the bed, sat down on a chair beside it, and looked at Ferrol earnestly and sadly.

"My dear! my dear, dear, dear!" she said in a whisper, "you look so handsome and so kind as you lie there —like no man I ever saw in my life. Who'd have fought as you fought—and nearly dead! Who'd have had brains enough to know just what to do! My darling, that never said 'my darling' to me, nor heard me call you so. Suppose you haven't a dollar, not a cent, in the world, and suppose you'll never earn a dollar or a cent in the world, what difference does that make to me? I could earn it; and I'd give more for a touch of your finger than a thousand dollars; and more for a month with you than for a lifetime with the richest man in the world. You never looked cross at me, or at any one, and you never say an unkind thing, and you never find fault when you suffer so. You never hurt any one, I know. You never hurt Vanne Castine—"

Her fingers twitched in her lap, and then clasped very tight, as she went on:

"You never hurt him, and yet he's tried to kill you in the most awful way. Perhaps you'll die now—perhaps you'll die to-night—but no, no, you shall not!" she cried in sudden fright and eagerness, as she got up and leaned over him. "You shall not die; you shall live—for a while—oh! yes, for a while yet," she added, with a pitiful yearning in her voice; "just for a little

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while—till you love me, and tell me so! Oh, how *could* that devil try to kill you!"

She suddenly drew herself up.

"I'll kill him and his bear too—now, now, while you lie there sleeping. And when you wake I'll tell you what I've done, and you'll—you'll love me then, and tell me so, perhaps. Yes, yes, I'll—"

She said no more, for her brother entered with the brandy.

"Put it there," she said, pointing to the table. "You watch him till I come. I'll be back in an hour; and then, when he wakes, we'll bathe him in the hot water and brandy."

"Who told you about hot water and brandy?" he asked her, curiously.

She did not answer him, but passed through the door and down the hall till she came to Nic's bedroom; she went in, took a pair of pistols from the wall, examined them, found they were fully loaded, and hurried from the room.

About a half-hour later she appeared before the house which once had belonged to Vanne Castine. The mortgage had been foreclosed, and the place had passed into the hands of Sophie and Magon Farcinelle; but Castine had taken up his abode in the house a few days before, and defied anyone to put him out.

A light was burning in the kitchen of the house. There were no curtains to the window, but an old coat had been hung up to serve the purpose, and light shone between a sleeve of it and the window-sill. Putting her face close to the window, the girl could see the bear in the corner, clawing at its chain and tossing its head from side to side, still panting and angry from the fight.

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Now and again, also, it licked the bayonet-wound between its shoulders, and rubbed its lacerated nose on its paw. Castine was mixing some tar and oil in a pan by the fire, to apply to the still bleeding wounds of his Michael. He had an ugly grin on his face.

He was dressed just as in the first day he appeared in the village, even to the fur cap; and presently, as he turned round, he began to sing the monotonous measure to which the bear had danced. It had at once a soothing effect upon the beast.

After he had gone from the store-room, leaving Ferrol dead, as he thought, it was this song alone which had saved himself from peril; for the beast was wild from pain, fury and the taste of blood. As soon as they had cleared the farmyard, he had begun this song, and the bear, cowed at first by the thrusts of its master's pike, quieted to the well-known ditty.

He approached the bear now, and, stooping, put some of the tar and oil upon its nose. It sniffed and rubbed off the salve, but he put more on; then he rubbed it into the wound of the breast. Once the animal made a fierce snap at his shoulder, but he deftly avoided it, gave it a thrust with a sharp-pointed stick, and began the song again. Presently he rose and came towards the fire.

As he did so he heard the door open. Turning round quickly, he saw Christine standing just inside. She had a shawl thrown round her, and one hand was thrust in the pocket of her dress. She looked from him to the bear, then back again to him.

He did not realise why she had come. For a moment, in his excited state, he almost thought she had come because she loved him. He had seen her twice since his return; but each time she would say nothing to him further than that she wished not to meet or to

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speak to him at all. He had pleaded with her, had grown angry, and she had left him. Who could tell—perhaps she had come to him now as she had come to him in the old days. He dropped the pan of tar and oil.

"Chris!" he said, and started forward to her.

At that moment the bear, as if it knew the girl's mission, sprang forward, with a growl. Its huge mouth was open, and all its fierce lust for killing showed again in its wild lunges. Castine turned, with an oath, and thrust the steel-set pike into its leg. It cowered at the voice and the punishment for an instant, but came on again.

Castine saw the girl raise a pistol and fire at the beast. He was so dumfounded that at first he did not move. Then he saw her raise another pistol. The wounded bear lunged heavily on its chain—once—twice—in a devilish rage, and as Christine prepared to fire, snapped the staple loose and sprang forward.

At the same moment Castine threw himself in front of the girl, and caught the onward rush. Calling the beast by its name, he grappled with it. They were man and servant no longer, but two animals fighting for their lives. Castine drew out his knife, as the bear, raised on its hind legs, crushed him in its immense arms, and still calling, half crazily, "Michael! Michael! down, Michael!" he plunged the knife twice in the beast's side.

The bear's teeth fastened in his shoulder; the horrible pressure of its arms was turning his face black; he felt death coming, when another pistol shot rang out close to his own head, and his breath suddenly came back. He staggered to the wall, and then came to the floor in a heap as the bear lurched downwards and fell over on its side, dead.

Christine had come to kill the beast and, perhaps, the

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man. The man had saved her life, and now she had saved his; and together they had killed the bear which had maltreated Tom Ferrol.

Castine's eyes were fixed on the dead beast. Everything was gone from him now—even the way to his meagre livelihood; and the cause of it all, as he in his blind, unnatural way thought, was this girl before him—this girl and her people. Her back was towards the door. Anger and passion were both at work in him at once.

"Chris," he said, "Chris, let's call it even—eh? Let's make it up. Chris, *ma chèrie*, don't you remember when we used to meet, and was fond of each other? Let's make it up and leave here—now—to-night—eh? I'm not so poor, after all. I'll be paid by Papineau, the leader of the Rebellion—" He made a couple of unsteady steps towards her, for he was weak yet. "What's the good—you're bound to come to me in the end! You've got the same kind of feelings in you; you've—"

She had stood still at first, dazed by his words; but she grew angry quickly, and was about to speak as she felt, when he went on:

"Stay here now with me. Don't go back. Don't you remember Shangois's house? Don't you remember that night—that night when—ah! Chris, stay here—"

Her face was flaming. "I'd rather stay in a room full of wild beasts like that"—she pointed to the bear—"than be with you one minute—you murderer!" she said, with choking anger.

He started towards her, saying:

"By the blood of Joseph! but you'll stay just the same; and—"

He got no further, for she threw the pistol in his face with all her might. It struck between his eyes with a

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thud, and he staggered back, blind, bleeding and faint, as she threw open the door and sped away in the darkness.

Reaching the Manor safely, she ran up to her room, arranged her hair, washed her hands, and came again to Ferrol's bedroom. Knocking softly she was admitted by Nic. There was an unnatural brightness in her eyes.

"Where've you been?" he asked, for he noticed this. "What've you been doing?"

"I've killed the bear that tried to kill him," she answered.

She spoke louder than she meant. Her voice awakened Ferrol.

"Eh, what?" he said, "killed the bear, mademoiselle, —my dear friend," he added, "killed the bear!" He coughed a little, and a twinge of pain crossed over his face.

She nodded, and her face was alight with pleasure.

She lifted up his head and gave him a little drink of brandy. His fingers closed on hers that held the glass. His touch thrilled her.

"That's good, that's easier," he remarked.

"We're going to bathe you in brandy and hot water, now—Nic and I," she said.

"Bathe me! Bathe me!" he said, in amused consternation.

"Hands and feet," Nic explained.

A few minutes later as she lifted up his head, her face was very near him; her breath was in his face. Her eyes half closed, her fingers trembled. He suddenly drew her to him and kissed her. She looked round swiftly, but her brother had not noticed.

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CHAPTER X

FERROL'S recovery from his injuries was swifter than might have been expected. As soon as he was able to move about Christine was his constant attendant. She had made herself his nurse, and no one had seriously interfered, though the Curé had not at all vaguely offered a protest to Madame Lavilette. But Madame Lavilette was now in the humour to defy or evade the Curé, whichever seemed the more convenient or more necessary. To be linked by marriage with the nobility would indeed be the justification of all her long-baffled hopes. Meanwhile, the parish gossiped, though little of that gossip was heard at the Manor Casimbault.

By and by the Curé ceased to visit the Manor, but the Regimental Surgeon came often, and sometimes stayed late. He, perhaps, could have given Madame Lavilette the best advice and warning; but, in truth, he enjoyed what he considered a piquant position. Once, drawing at his pipe, as little like an Englishman as possible, he tried to say with an English accent, "Amusing and awkward situation!" but he said, "Damn funny and *chic!*" instead. He had no idea that any particular harm would be done—either by love or marriage; and neither seemed certain.

One day as Ferrol, entirely convalescent, was sitting in an arbour of the Manor garden, half asleep, he was awakened by voices near him.

He did not recognise one of the voices; the other was Nic Lavilette's.

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The strange voice was saying: "I have collected five thousand dollars—all that can be got in the two counties. It is at the Seigneury. Here is an order on the Seigneur Duhamel. Go there in two days and get the money. You will carry it to headquarters. These are General Papineau's orders. You will understand that your men—"

Ferrol heard no more, for the two rebels passed on, their voices becoming indistinct. He sat for a few moments moveless, for an idea had occurred to him even as Papineau's agent spoke.

If that money were only his!

Five thousand dollars—how that would ease the situation! The money belonged to whom? To a lot of rebels: to be used for making war against the British Government. After the money left the hands of the men who gave it—Lavilette and the rest—it wasn't theirs. It belonged to a cause. Well, he was the enemy of that cause. All was fair in love and war!

There were two ways of doing it. He could waylay Nicolas as he came from the house of the old seigneur, could call to him to throw up his hands in good highwayman fashion, and, well disguised, could get away with the money without being discovered. Or again, he could follow Nic from the Seigneury to the Manor, discover where he kept the money, and devise a plan to steal it.

For some time he had given up smoking; but now, as a sort of celebration of his plan, he opened his cigar case, and finding two cigars left, took one out and lighted it.

"By Jove," he said to himself, "thieving is a nice come-down, I must say! But a man has to live, and I'm sick of charity—sick of it. I've had enough."

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He puffed his cigar briskly, and enjoyed the forbidden and deadly luxury to the full.

Presently he got up, took his stick, came down-stairs, and passed out into the garden. The shoulder which had been lacerated by the bear drooped forward somewhat, and seemed smaller than the other. Although he held himself as erect as possible, you still could have laid your hand in the hollow of his left breast, and it would have done no more than give it a natural fulness. Perhaps it was a sort of vanity, perhaps a kind of courage, which made him resolutely straighten himself, in spite of the deadly weight dragging his shoulder down. He might be melancholy in secret, but in public he was gay and hopeful, and talked of everything except himself. On that interesting topic he would permit no discussion. Yet there often came jugs and jars from friendly people, who never spoke to him of his disease—they were polite and sensitive, these humble folk—but sent him their home-made medicines, with assurances scrawled on paper that "it would cure Mr. Ferrol's cold, oh, absolutely."

Before the Lavilettes he smiled, and received the gifts in a debonair way, sometimes making whimsical remarks. At the same time the jugs and jars of cordial (whose contents varied from whiskey, molasses and boneset, to rum, licorice, gentian and sarsaparilla roots) he carried to his room; and he religiously tried them all by turn. Each seemed to do him good for a few days, then to fail of effect; and he straightway tried another, with renewed hope on every occasion, and subsequent disappointment. He also secretly consulted the Regimental Surgeon, who was too kind-hearted to tell him the truth; and he tried his hand at various remedies of his own, which did no more than

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to loosen the cough which was breaking down his strength.

As now, he often walked down the street swinging his cane, not as though he needed it for walking, but merely for occupation and companionship. He did not delude the villagers by these sorrowful deceptions, but they made believe he did. There were a few people who did not like him; but they were of that cantankerous minority who put thorns in the bed of the elect.

To-day, occupied with his thoughts, he walked down the main road, then presently diverged on a side road which led past Magon Farcinelle's house to an old disused mill, owned by Magon's father. He paused when he came opposite Magon's house, and glanced up at the open door. He was tired, and the coolness of the place looked inviting. He passed through the gate, and went lightly up the path. He could see straight through the house into the harvest-fields at the back. Presently a figure crossed the lane of light, and made a cheerful living foreground to the blue sky beyond the farther door. The light and ardour of the scene gave him a thrill of pleasure, and hurried his footsteps. The air was palpitating with sleepy comfort round him, and he felt a new vitality pass into him: his imagination was feeding his enfeebled body; his active brain was giving him a fresh counterfeit of health. The hectic flush on his pale face deepened. He came to the wooden steps of the piazza, or stoop, and then paused a moment, as if for breath; but, suddenly conscious of what he was doing, he ran briskly up the steps, knocked with his cane upon the door jamb, and, without waiting, stepped inside.

Between him and the outer door, against the ardent blue background, stood Sophie Farcinelle—the English-

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faced Sophie—a little heavy, a little slow, but with the large, long profile which is the type of English beauty—docile, healthy, cow-like. Her face, within her sunbonnet, caught the reflected light, and the pink calico of her dress threw a glow over her cheeks and forehead, and gave a good gleam to her eyes. She had in her hands a dish of strawberries. It was a charming picture in the eyes of a man to whom the feelings of robustness and health were mostly a reminiscence. Yet, while the first impression was on him, he contrasted Sophie with the impetuous, fiery-hearted Christine, with her dramatic Gallic face and blood, to the latter's advantage, in spite of the more harmonious setting of this picture.

Sophie was in place in this old farmhouse, with its dormer windows, with the weaver's loom in the large kitchen, the meat-block by the fireplace, and the big bread-tray by the stove, where the yeast was as industrious as the reapers beyond in the fields. She was in keeping with the chromo of the Madonna and the Child upon the wall, with the sprig of holy palm at the shrine in the corner, with the old King Louis blunderbuss above the chimney.

Sophie tried to take off her sunbonnet with one hand, but the knot tightened, and it tipped back on her head, giving her a piquant air. She flushed.

"Oh, m'sieu'!" she said in English, "it's kind of you to call. I am quite glad—yes."

Then she turned round to put the strawberries upon a table, but he was beside her in an instant and took the dish out of her hands. Placing it on the table, he took a couple of strawberries in his fingers.

"May I?" he asked in French.

She nodded as she whipped off the sunbonnet, and replied in her own language:

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"Certainly, as many as you want."

He bit into one, but got no further with it. Her back was turned to him, and he threw the berry out of the window. She felt rather than saw what he had done. She saw that he was fagged. She instantly thought of a cordial she had in the house, the gift of a nun from the Ursuline Convent in Quebec; a precious little bottle which she had kept for the anniversary of her wedding day. If she had been told in the morning that she would open that bottle now, and for a stranger, she probably would have resented the idea with scorn.

His disguised weariness still exciting her sympathy, she offered him a chair.

"You will sit down, m'sieu'?" she asked. "It is very warm."

She did not say: "You look very tired." She instinctively felt that it would suggest the delicate state of his health.

The chair was inviting enough, with its chintz cover and wicker seat, but he would never admit fatigue. He threw his leg half jauntily over the end of the table and said:

"No—no, thanks; I'd rather not sit."

His forehead was dripping with perspiration. He took out his handkerchief and dried it. His eyes were a little heavy, but his complexion was a delicate and unnatural pink and white—like a piece of fine porcelain. It was a face without care, without vice, without fear, and without morals. For the absence of vice with the absence of morals are not incongruous in a human face.

Sophie went into another room for a moment, and brought back a quaint cut-glass bottle of cordial.

"It is very good," she said, as she took the cork out; "better than peach brandy or things like that."

He watched her pour it out into a wine-glass, and as

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soon as he saw the colour and the flow of it he was certain of its quality.

"That looks like good stuff," he said, as she handed him a glass brimming over; "but you must have one with me. I can't drink alone, you know."

"Oh, m'sieu', if you please, no," she answered half timidly, flattered by the glance of his eye—a look of flattery which was part of his stock-in-trade. It had got him into trouble all his life.

"Ah, madame, but I plead yes!" he answered, with a little encouraging nod towards her. "Come, let me pour it for you."

He took the odd little bottle and poured her glass as full as his own.

"If Magon were only here—he'd like some, I know," she said, vaguely struggling with a sense of impropriety, though why, she did not know; for, on the surface, this was only dutiful hospitality to a distinguished guest. The impropriety probably lay in the sensations roused by this visit and this visitor. "I intended—"

"Oh, we must try to get along without monsieur," he said, with a little cough; "he's a busy gentleman."

The rather rude and flippant sentiment seemed hardly in keeping with the fatal token of his disease.

"Of course, he's far away out there in the field, mowing," she said, as if in apology for something or other.

"Yes, he's ever so far away," was his reply, as he turned half lazily to the open doorway.

Neither spoke for a moment. The eyes of both were on the distant harvest-fields. Vaguely, not decisively, the hazy, indolent air of summer was broken by the lazy droning of the locusts and grasshoppers. A driver was calling to his oxen down the dusty road, the warning bark of a dog came across the fields from the gap in

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the fence which he was tending, and the blades of the scythes made three-quarter circles of light as the mowers travelled down the wheat-fields.

When their eyes met again, the glasses of cordial were at their lips. He held her look by the intentional warmth and meaning of his own, drinking very slowly to the last drop; and then, like a *bon viveur*, drew a breath of air through his open mouth, and nodded his satisfaction.

"By Jove, but it is good stuff!" he said. "Here's to the nun that made it," he added, making a motion to drink from the empty glass.

Sophie had not drunk all her cordial. At least one-third of it was still in the glass. She turned her head away, a little dismayed by his toast.

"Come, that's not fair," he said. "That elixir shouldn't be wasted. *Voilà*, every drop of it now!" he added, with an insinuating smile and gesture.

"Oh, m'sieu'!" she said in protest, but drank it off.

He still held the empty glass in his hand, twisting it round musingly.

"A little more, m'sieu'?" she asked, "just a little?"

Perhaps she was surprised that he did not hesitate. He instantly held out his glass.

"It was made by a saint; the result should be health and piety—I need both," he added, with a little note of irony in his voice.

"So, once again, my giver of good gifts—to you!" He raised his glass again, toasting her, but paused. "No, this won't do; you must join me," he added.

"Oh, no, m'sieu', no! It is not possible. I feel it now in my head and in all of me. Oh, I feel so warm all through, and my heart it beats so very fast! Oh, no, m'sieu', no more!"

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Her cheeks were glowing, and her eyes had become softer and more brilliant under the influence of the potent liqueur.

"Well, well, I'll let you off this time; but next time—next time, remember."

He raised the glass once more, and let the cordial drain down lazily.

He had said, "next time"—she noticed that. He seemed very fond of this strong liqueur. She placed the bottle on the table, her own glass beside it.

"For a minute, a little minute," she said suddenly, and went quickly into the other room.

He coolly picked up the bottle of liqueur, poured his glass full once more, and began drinking it off in little sips. Presently he stood up, and throwing back his shoulder, with a little ostentation of health, he went over to the chintz-covered chair, and sat down in it. His mood was contented and brisk. He held up the glass of liqueur against the sunlight.

"Better than any Benedictine I ever tasted," he said. "A dozen bottles of that would cure this beastly cold of mine. By Jove! it would. It's as good as the Gardivani I got that blessed day when we chaps of the Ninetieth breakfasted with the King of Savoy." He laughed to himself at the reminiscence. "What a day that was, what a stunning day that was!"

He was still smiling, his white teeth showing humorously, when Sophie again entered the room. He had forgotten her, forgotten all about her. As she came in he made a quick, courteous movement to rise—too quick; for a sharp pain shot through his breast, and he grew pale about the lips. But he made essay to stand up lightly, nevertheless.

She saw his paleness, came quickly to him, and put

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out her hand to gently force him back into his seat, but as instantly decided not to notice his indisposition, and turned towards the table instead. Taking the bottle of cordial, she brought it over, and not looking at him, said:

"Just one more little glass, m'sieu'?" She had in her other hand a plate of seed-cakes. "But yes, you must sit down and eat a cake," she added adroitly. "They are very nice, and I made them myself. We are very fond of them; and once, when the bishop stayed at our house, he liked them too."

Before he sat down he drank off the whole of the cordial in the glass.

She took a chair near him, and breaking a seed-cake began eating it. His tongue was loosened now, and he told her what he was smiling at when she came into the room. She was amused, and there was a little awe to her interest also. To think—she was sitting here, talking easily to a man who had eaten at kings' tables—with the king! Yet she was at ease too—since she had drunk the cordial. It had acted on her like some philtre. He begged that she would go on with her work; and she got the dish of strawberries, and began stemming them while he talked.

It was much easier talking or listening to him while she was so occupied. She had never enjoyed anything so much in her life. She was not clever, like Christine, but she had admiration of ability, and was obedient to the charm of temperament. Whenever Ferrol had met her he had lavished little attentions on her, had said things to her that carried weight far beyond their intention. She had been pleased at the time, but they had had no permanent effect.

Now everything he said had a different influence:

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she felt for the first time that it was not easy to look into his eyes, and as if she never could again without betraying—she knew not what.

So they sat there, he talking, she listening and questioning now and then. She had placed the bottle of liqueur and the seed-cakes at his elbow on the window-sill; and as if mechanically, he poured out a glassful, and after a little time, still another, and at last, apparently unconsciously, poured her out one also, and handed it to her. She shook her head; he still held the glass poised; her eyes met his; she made a feeble sort of protest, then took the glass and drank off the liqueur in little sips.

"Gad, that puts fat on the bones, and gives the gay heart!" he said. "Doesn't it, though?"

She laughed quietly. Her nature was warm, and she had the animal-like fondness for physical ease and content.

"It's as if there wasn't another stroke of work to do in the world," she answered, and sat contentedly back in her chair, the strawberries in her lap. Her fingers, stained with red, lay beside the bowl. All the strings of conscious duty were loose, and some of them were flying. The bumble-bee that flew in at the door and boomed about the room contributed to the day-dream.

She never quite knew how it happened that a moment later he was bending over the back of her chair, with her face upturned to his, and his lips— With that touch thrilling her, she sprang to her feet, and turned away from him towards the table. Her face was glowing like a peony, and a troubled light came into her eyes. He came over to her, after a moment, and spoke over her shoulders as he just touched her waist with his fingers.

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"*A la bonne heure*—Sophie!"

"Oh, it isn't—it isn't right," she said, her body slightly inclining from him.

"One minute out of a whole life— What does it matter! *Ce ne fait rien!* Good-bye—Sophie."

Now she inclined towards him. He was about to put his arms round her, when he heard the distant sound of a horse's hoofs. He let her go, and turned towards the front door. Through it he saw Christine driving up the road. She would pass the house.

"Good-bye—Sophie," he said again over her shoulder, softly; and, picking up his hat and stick, he left the house.

Her eyes followed him dreamily as he went up the road. She sat down in a chair, the trance of the passionate moment still on her, and began to brood. She vaguely heard the rattle of a buggy—Christine's—as it passed the house, and her thoughts drifted into a new-discovered hemisphere where life was all a somnolent sort of joy and bodily love.

She was roused at last by a song which came floating across the fields. The air she knew, and the voice she knew. The chanson was, "*Le Voleur de grand Chemin!*" The voice was her husband's.

She knew the words, too; and even before she could hear them, they were fitting into the air:

> "*Qui va là!* There's some one in the orchard,
> There's a robber in the apple-trees;
> *Qui va là!* He is creeping through the doorway.
> *Ah, allez-vous-en! Va-t'-en!*"

She hurriedly put away the cordial and the seed-cakes. She picked up the bottle. It was empty. Ferrol had drunk near half a pint of the liqueur! She must

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get another bottle of it somehow. It would never do for Magon to know that the precious anniversary cordial was all gone—in this way.

She hurried towards the other room. The voice of the farrier-farmer was more distinct now. She could hear clearly the words of the song. She looked out. The square-shouldered, blue-shirted Magon was skirting the turnip field, making a short cut home. His straw hat was pushed back on his head, his scythe was over his shoulder. He had cut the last swathe in the field—now for Sophie. He was not handsome, and she had known that always; but he seemed rough and coarse to-day. She did not notice how well he fitted in with everything about him; and he was so healthy that even three glasses of that cordial would have sent him reeling to bed.

As she passed into the dining-room, the words of the song followed her:

> "*Qui va là!* If you please, I own the mansion,
> And this is my grandfather's gun!
> *Qui va là!* Now you're a dead man, robber—
> *Ah, allez-vous-en! Va-t'-en!*"

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CHAPTER XI

"I saw you coming," Ferrol said, as Christine stopped the buggy.

"You have been to see Magon and Sophie?" she asked.

"Yes, for a minute," he answered. "Where are you going?"

"Just for a drive," she replied. "Come, won't you?"

He got in, and she drove on.

"Where were you going?" she asked.

"Why, to the old mill," was his reply. "I wanted a little walk, then a rest."

Ten minutes later they were looking from a window of the mill, out upon the great wheel which had done all the work the past generations had given it to do, and was now dropping into decay as it had long dropped into disuse. Moss had gathered on the great paddles; many of them were broken, and the débris had been carried away by the freshets of spring and the floods of autumn.

They were silent for a time. Presently she looked up at him.

"You're much better to-day," she said; "better than you've been since—since that night!"

"Oh, I'm all right," he answered; "right as can be."

He suddenly turned on her, put his hand upon her arm, and said:

"Come, now, tell me what there was between you and Vanne Castine—once upon a time."

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"He was in love with me five years ago," she said.

"And five years ago you were in love with him, eh?"

"How dare you say that to me!" she answered. "I never was. I always hated him."

She told her lie with unscrupulous directness. He did not believe her; but what did that matter! It was no reason why he should put her at a disadvantage, and, strangely enough, he did not feel any contempt for her because she told the lie, nor because she had once cared for Castine. Probably in those days she had never known anybody who was very much superior to Castine. She was in love with himself now; that was enough, or nearly enough, and there was no particular reason why he should demand more from her than she demanded from him. She was lying to him now because—well, because she loved him. Like the majority of men, when women who love them have lied to them so, they have seen in it a compliment as strong as the act was weak. It was more to him now that this girl should love him than that she should be upright, or moral, or truthful. Such is the egotism and vanity of such men.

"Well, he owes me several years of life. I put in a bad hour that night."

He knew that "several years of life" was a misstatement; but, then, they were both sinners.

Her eyes flashed, she stamped her foot, and her fingers clinched.

"I wish I'd killed him when I killed his bear!" she said.

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Vanne Castine in the forearms of the huge beast, with his eyes bulging from his head, his face becoming black, and he saw blind justice in that death grip; Christine's pistol at the bear's head, and the shoulder in the teeth of the beast, and then!

"By the Lord Harry," he said, as she stood panting, with her hands fixed in the last little dramatic gesture, "what a little spitfire and brick you are!"

All at once he caught her away from the open window and drew her to him. Whether what he said that moment, and what he did then, would have been said and done if it were not for the liqueur he had drunk at Sophie's house would be hard to tell; but the sum of it was that she was his and he was hers. She was to be his until the end of all, no matter what the end might be.

She looked up at him, her face glowing, her bosom beating—beating, every pulse in her tingling.

"You mean that you love me, and that—that you want—to marry me?" she said; and then, with a fervent impulse, she threw her arms round his neck and kissed him again and again.

The directness of her question dumfounded him for the moment; but what she suggested (though it might be selfish in him to agree to it) would be the best thing that could happen to him. So he lied to her, and said:

"Yes, that's what I meant. But, then, to tell you the sober truth, I'm as poor as a church mouse."

He paused. She looked up at him with a sudden fear in her face.

"You're not married?" she asked, "you're not married?" then, breaking off suddenly: "I don't care if you are, I don't! I love you—love you! Nobody would look after you as I would. I don't; no, I don't care."

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She drew up closer and closer to him.

"No, I don't mean that I was married," he said. "I meant—what you know—that my life isn't worth, perhaps, a ten-days' purchase."

Her face became pale again.

"You can have my life," she said; "have it just as long as you live, and I'll make you live a year—yes, I'll make you live ten years. Love can do anything; it can do everything. We'll be married to-morrow."

"That's rather difficult," he answered. "You see, you're a Catholic, and I'm a Protestant, and they wouldn't marry us here, I'm afraid; at least not at once, perhaps not at all. You see, I—I've only one lung."

He had never spoken so frankly of his illness before.

"Well, we can go over the border into the English province—into Upper Canada," she answered. "Don't you see? It's only a few miles' drive to a village. I can go over one day, get the licence; then, a couple of days after, we can go over together and be married. And then, then—"

He smiled. "Well, then it won't make much difference, will it? We'll have to fit in one way or another, eh?"

"We could be married afterwards by the Curé, if everybody made a fuss. The bishop would give us a dispensation. It's a great sin to marry a heretic, but—"

"But love—eh, *ma cigale!*" Then he took her eagerly, tenderly into his arms; and probably he had then the best moment in his life.

Sophie Farcinelle saw them driving back together. She was sitting at early supper with Magon, when, raising her head at the sound of wheels, she saw Christine laughing and Ferrol leaning affectionately towards her. Ferrol had forgotten herself and the incident of the

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afternoon. It meant nothing to him. With her, however, it was vital: it marked a change in her life. Her face flushed, her hands trembled, and she arose hurriedly and went to get something from the kitchen, that Magon might not see her face.

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CHAPTER XII

TWENTY men had suddenly disappeared from Bonaventure on the day that Ferrol visited Sophie Farcinelle, and it was only the next morning that the cause of their disappearance was generally known.

There had been many rumours abroad that a detachment of men from the parish were to join Papineau. The Rebellion was to be publicly declared on a certain date near at hand, but nothing definite was known; and because the Curé condemned any revolt against British rule, in spite of the evils the province suffered from bad government, every recruit who joined Nic Lavilette's standard was sworn to secrecy. Louis Lavilette and his wife knew nothing of their son's complicity in the rumoured revolt—one's own people are generally the last to learn of one's misdeeds. Madame would have been sorely frightened and chagrined if she had known the truth, for she was partly English. Besides, if the Rebellion did not succeed, disgrace must come, and then good-bye to the progress of the Lavilettes, and good-bye, maybe, to her son!

In spite of disappointments and rebuffs in many quarters, she still kept faith with her ambitions, and, fortunately for herself, she did not see the abject failure of many of her schemes. Some of the gentry from the neighbouring parishes had called, chiefly, she was aware,

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of joy in her eyes, that a special Providence had sent Mr. Ferrol to them, and she did not know how to be grateful enough. He suggested a gift to the church in token of gratitude, but her thanksgiving did not take that form.

Nic was entirely French at heart, and ignored his mother's nationality. He resented the English blood in his veins, and atoned for it by increased loyalty to his French origin. This was probably not so much a principle as a fancy. He had a kind of importance also in the parish, and in his own eyes, because he made as much in three months by buying and selling horses as most people did in a year. The respect of Bonaventure for his ability was considerable; and though it had no marked admiration for his character, it appreciated his drolleries, and was attracted by his high spirits. He had always been erratic, so that when he disappeared for days at a time no one thought anything of it, and when he came home to the Manor at unearthly hours it created no peculiar notice.

He had chosen very good men for his recruits; for, though they talked much among themselves, they drew a cordon of silence round their little society of revolution. They vanished in the night, and Nic with them; but he returned the next afternoon when the fire of excitement was at its height. As he rode through the streets, people stopped him and poured out questions; but he only shrugged his shoulders, and gave no information, and neither denied nor affirmed anything.

Acting under orders, he had marched his company to make conjunction with other companies at a point in the mountains twenty miles away, but had himself returned to get the five thousand dollars gathered by Papineau's agent. Now that the Rebellion was known,

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Nicolas intended to try and win his father and his father's money and horses over to the cause.

Because Ferrol was an Englishman he made no confidant of him, and because he was a dying man he saw in him no menace to the cause. Besides, was not Ferrol practically dependent upon their hospitality? If he had guessed that his friend knew accurately of his movements since the night he had seen Vanne Castine hand him his commission from Papineau, he would have felt less secure: for, after all, love—or prejudice—of country is a principle in the minds of most men deeper than any other. When all other morals go, this latent tendency to stand by the blood of his clan is the last moral in man that bears the test without treason. If he had known that Ferrol had written to the Commandant at Quebec, telling him of the imminence of the Rebellion, and the secret recruiting and drilling going on in the parishes, his popular comrade might have paid a high price for his disclosure.

That morning at sunrise, Christine, saying she was going upon a visit to the next parish, started away upon her mission to the English province. Ferrol had urged her to let him go, but she had refused. He had not yet fully recovered from his adventure with the bear, she said. Then he said they might go together; but she insisted that she must make the way clear, and have everything ready. They might go and find the minister away, and then—*voilà*, what a chance for *cancan!* So she went alone.

From his window he watched her depart; and as she drove away in the fresh morning he fell to thinking what it might seem like if he had to look forward to ten, twenty, or forty years with just such a woman as his wife. Now she was at her best (he did not deceive him-

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self), but in ten years or less the effects of her early life would show in many ways. She had once loved Vanne Castine! and now vanity and cowardice, or unscrupulousness, made her lie about it. He would have her at her best—a young, vigorous radiant nature—for his short life; and then, good-bye, my lover, good-bye! Selfish? Of course. But she would rather—she had said it—have him for the time he had to live than not at all. Position? What was his position? Cast off by his family, forgotten by his old friends, in debt, penniless—let position be hanged! Self-preservation was the first law. What was the difference between this girl and himself? Morals? She was better than himself, anyhow. She had genuine passions, and her sins would be in behalf of those genuine passions. He had kicked over the moral traces many a time from absolute selfishness. She had clean blood in her veins, she was good-looking, she had a quick wit, she was an excellent horse-woman—what then? If she wasn't so "well bred," that was a matter of training and opportunity which had never quite been hers. What was he himself? A loafer, "a deuced unfortunate loafer," but still a loafer. He had no trade and no profession. Confound it! how much better off, and how much better in reality, were these people who had trades and occupations. In the vigour and lithe activity of that girl's body was the force of generations of honest workers. He argued and thought—as every intelligent man in his position would have done—until he had come into the old life again, and into the presence of the old advantages and temptations!

Christine pulled up for a moment on a little hill, and waved her whip. He shook his handkerchief from the window. That was their prearranged signal. He

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shook it until she had driven away beyond the hill and was lost to sight, and still stood there at the window looking out.

Presently Madame Laviette appeared in the garden below, and he was sure, from the way she glanced up at the window, and from her position in the shrubbery that she had seen the signal. Madame did not look displeased. On the contrary, though an alliance with Christine now seemed unlikely, because of the state of Ferrol's health and his religion and nationality, it pleased her to think that it might have been.

When she had passed into the house, Ferrol sat down on the broad window-sill, and looked out the way Christine had gone. He was thinking of the humiliation of his position, and how it would be more humiliating when he married Christine, should the Laviettes turn against them—which was quite possible. And from outside: the whole parish—a few excepted—sympathised with the Rebellion, and once the current of hatred of the English set in, he would be swept down by it. There were only three English people in the place. Then, if it became known that he had given information to the authorities, his life would be less uncertain than it was just now. Yet, confound the dirty lot of little rebels, it served them right! He couldn't sit by and see a revolt against British rule without raising a hand.

Warn Nic? To what good? The result would be just the same. But if harm came to this intended brother-in-law—well, why borrow trouble? He was not the Lord in Heaven, that he could [illegible] everything as he wanted it! It was a to[illegible] would see the sport out. "Have to cou[illegible]ough, my boy!" he said, as he swayed [illegible] the head cough hacking in his throat

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As he had said yesterday, there was only one thing to do: he must have that five thousand dollars which was to be handed over by the old seigneur. This time he did not attempt to find excuses; he called the thing by its proper name.

"Well, it's stealing, or it's highway robbery, no matter how one looks at it," he said to himself. "I wonder what's the matter with me. I must have got started wrong somehow. Money to spend, playing at soldiering, made to believe I'd have a pot of money and an estate, and then told one fine day that a son and heir, with health in form and feature, was come, and Esau must go. No profession, except soldiering, debt staring me in the face, and a nasty mess of it all round. I wonder why it is that I didn't pull myself together, be honest to a hair, and fight my way through? I suppose I hadn't it in me. I wasn't the right metal at the start. There's always been a black sheep in our family, a gentleman or a lady, born without morals, and I happen to be the gentleman this generation. I always knew what was right, and liked it, and I always did what was wrong, and liked it—nearly always. But I suppose I was fated. I was bound to get into a hole, and I'm in it now, with one lung, and a wife in prospect to support. I suppose if I were to write down all the decent things I've thought in my life, and put them beside the indecent things I've done, nobody would believe the same man was responsible for them. I'm one of the men who ought to be put above temptation; be well bridled, well fed, and the mere cost of comfortable living provided, and then I'd do big things. But that isn't the way of the world; and so I feel that a morning like this, and the love of a girl like that" (he nodded towards the horizon into which Christine had

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gone) "ought to make a man sing a *Te Deum*. And yet this evening, or to-morrow evening, or the next, I'll steal five thousand dollars, if it can be done, and risk my neck in doing it—to say nothing of family honour, and what not."

He got up from the window, went to his trunk, opened it, and, taking out a pistol, examined it carefully, cocking and uncocking it, and after loading it, and again trying the trigger, put it back again. There came a tap at the door, and to his call a servant entered with a glass of milk and whiskey, with which he always began the day.

The taste of the liquid brought back the afternoon of the day before, and he suddenly stopped drinking, threw back his head, and laughed softly.

"By Jingo, but that liqueur was stunning—and so was—Sophie . . . *Sophie!* That sounds compromisingly familiar this morning, and very improper also! But Sophie is a very nice person, and I ought to be well ashamed of myself. I needed the bit and curb both yesterday. It'll never do at all. If I'm going to marry Christine, we must have no family complications. 'Must have'!" he exclaimed. "But what if Sophie already?—good Lord!"

It was a strange sport altogether, in which some people were bound to get a bad fall, himself probably among the rest. He intended to rob the brother, he had set the government going against the brother's revolutionary cause, he was going to marry one sister, and the other—the less thought and said about that matter the better.

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gave him no opportunity. What he knew he knew, and he could make use of; but he wanted no further confidences. Ever since the night of the fight with the bear there had been nothing said on matters concerning the Rebellion. If Nicolas disclosed any secret now, it must surely be about the money, and that must not be if he could prevent it. But he watched his friend, nevertheless.

Night came, and Christine did not return; eight o'clock, nine o'clock. Lavilette and his wife were a little anxious; but Ferrol and Nicolas made excuses for her, and, in the wild talk and gossip about the Rebellion, attention was easily shifted from her. Besides, Christine was well used to taking care of herself.

Lavilette flatly refused to give Nic a penny for "the cause," and stormed at his connection with it; but at last became pacified, and agreed it was best that Madame Lavilette should know nothing about Nic's complicity just yet. At half past nine o'clock Nic left the house and took the road towards the Seigneury.

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CHAPTER XIII

ABOUT half-way between the Seigneury and the main street of the village there was a huge tree, whose limbs stretched across the road and made a sort of archway. In the daytime, during the summer, foot travellers, carts and carriages, with their drivers, loitered in its shade as they passed, grateful for the rest it gave; but at night, even when it was moonlight, the wide branches threw a dark and heavy shadow, and the passage beneath them was gloomy travel. Many a foot traveller hesitated to pass into that umbrageous circle, and skirted the fence beyond the branches on the further side of the road instead.

When Nicolas Lavilette, returning from the Seigneury with the precious bag of gold for Papineau, came hurriedly along the road towards the village, he half halted, with sudden premonition of danger, a dozen feet or so from the great tree. But like most young people, who are inclined to trust nothing but their own strong arms and what their eyes can see, he withstood the temptation to skirt the fence; and with a little half-scornful laugh at himself, yet a little timidity also (or he would not have laughed at all), he hurried under the branches. He had not gone three steps when the light of a dark lantern flashed suddenly in his face, and a pistol touched his forehead. All he could see was a figure clothed entirely in black, even to hands and face, with only holes for eyes, nose and mouth.

He stood perfectly still; the shock was so sudden. There was something determined and deadly in the

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pose of the figure before him, in the touch of the weapon, in the clearness of the light. His eyes dropped, and fixed involuntarily upon the lantern.

He had a revolver with him; but it was useless to attempt to defend himself with it. Not a word had been spoken. Presently, with the fingers that held the lantern, his assailant made a motion of *Hands up!* There was no reason why he should risk his life without a chance of winning, so he put up his hands. At another motion he drew out the bag of gold with his left hand, and, obeying the direction of another gesture, dropped it on the ground. There was a pause, then another gesture, which he pretended not to understand.

"Your pistol!" said the voice in a whisper through the mask.

He felt the cold steel at his forehead press a little closer; he also felt how steady it was. He was no fool. He had been in trouble before in his lifetime; he drew out the pistol, and passed it, handle first, to three fingers stretched out from the dark lantern.

The figure moved to where the money and the pistol were, and said, in a whisper still:

"Go!"

He had one moment of wild eagerness to try his luck in a sudden assault, but that passed as suddenly as it came; and with the pistol still covering him, he moved out into the open road, with a helpless anger on him.

A crescent moon was struggling through floes of fleecy clouds, the stars were shining, and so the road was not entirely dark. He went about thirty steps, then turned and looked back. The figure was still standing there, with the pistol and the light. He walked on another twenty or thirty steps, and once again looked back. The light and the pistol were still

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there. Again he walked on. But now he heard the rumble of buggy wheels behind. Once more he looked back: the figure and the light had gone. The buggy wheels sounded nearer. With a sudden feeling of courage, he turned round and ran back swiftly. The light suddenly flashed again.

"It's no use," he said to himself, and turned and walked slowly along the road.

The sound of the buggy wheels came still nearer. Presently it was obscured by passing under the huge branches of the tree. Then the horse, buggy and driver appeared at the other side, and in a few moments had overtaken him. He looked up sharply, scrutinisingly. Suddenly he burst out:

"Holy mother, Chris, is that you! Where've you been? Are you all right?"

She had whipped up her horse at first sight of him, thinking he might be some drunken rough.

"*Mais, mon dieu,* Nic, is that you? I thought at first you were a highwayman!"

"No, you've passed the highwayman! Come, let me get in."

Five minutes afterwards she knew exactly what had happened to him.

"Who could it be?" she asked.

"I thought at first it was that beast Vanne Castine!" he answered; "he's the only one that knew about the money, besides the agent and the old seigneur. He brought word from Papineau. But it was too tall for him, and he wouldn't have been so quiet about it. Just like a ghost. It makes my flesh creep now!"

It did not seem such a terrible thing to her at the moment, for she had in her pocket the licence to marry the Honourable Tom Ferrol upon the morrow, and she

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thought, with joy, of seeing him just as soon as she set foot in the doorway of the Manor Casimbault.

It was something of a shock to her that she did not see him for quite a half hour after she arrived home, and that was half past ten o'clock. But women forget neglect quickly in the delight of a lover's presence; so her disappointment passed. Yet she could not help speaking of it.

"Why weren't you at the door to meet me when I came back to-night with that—*that* in my pocket?" she asked him, his arm round her.

"I've got a kicking lung, you know," he said, with a half ironical, half self-pitying smile.

"Oh, forgive me, forgive me, Tom, my love!" she said as she buried her face on his breast.

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CHAPTER XIV

BEFORE he left for the front next morning to join his company and march to Papineau's headquarters, Nic came to Ferrol, told him, with rage and disappointment, the story of the highway robbery, and also that he hoped Ferrol would not worry about the Rebellion, and would remain at the Manor Casimbault in any case.

"Anyhow," said he, "my mother's half English; so you're not alone. We're going to make a big fight for it. We've stood it as long as we can. But we're friends in this, aren't we, Ferrol?"

There was a pause, in which Ferrol sipped his whiskey and milk, and continued dressing. He set the glass down, and looked towards the open window, through which came the smell of the ripe orchard and the fragrance of the pines. He turned to Lavilette at last and said, as he fastened his collar:

"Yes, you and I are friends, Nic; but I'm a Britisher, and my people have been Britishers since Edward the Third's time; and for this same Quebec two of my great-granduncles fought and lost their lives. If I were sound of wind and limb I'd fight, like them, to keep what they helped to get. You're in for a rare good beating, and, see, my friend—while I wouldn't do you any harm personally, I'd crawl on my knees from here to the citadel at Quebec to get a pot-shot at your rag-tag-and-bob-tail 'patriots.' You can count me a first-class enemy to your 'cause,' though I'm not a first-class fighting man. And now, Nic, give me a lift with my coat. This shoulder jibs a bit since the bear-baiting."

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Lavilette was naturally prejudiced in Ferrol's favour; and this deliberate and straightforward patriotism more pleased than offended him. His own patriotism was not a deep or lasting thing: vanity and a restless spirit were its fountains of inspiration. He knew that Ferrol was penniless—or he was so yesterday—and this quiet defiance of events in the very camp of the enemy could not but appeal to his ebullient, Gallic chivalry. Ferrol did not say these things because he had five thousand dollars behind him, for he would have said them if he were starving and dying—perhaps out of an inherent stubbornness, perhaps because this hereditary virtue in him would have been as hard to resist as his sins.

"That's all right, Ferrol," answered Lavilette. "I hope you'll stay here at the Manor, no matter what comes. You're welcome. Will you?"

"Yes, I'll stay, and glad to. I can't very well do anything else. I'm bankrupt. Haven't got a penny —of my own," he added, with daring irony. "Besides, it's comfortable here, and I feel like one of the family; and, anyhow, Life is short and Time is a pacer!" His wearing cough emphasised the statement.

"It won't be easy for you in Bonaventure," said Nicolas, walking restlessly up and down. "They're nearly all for the cause, all except the Curé. But he can't do much now, and he'll keep out of the mess. By the time he has a chance to preach against it, next Sunday, every man that wants to 'll be at the front, and fighting. But you'll be all right, I think. They like you here."

"I've a couple of good friends to see me through," was the quiet reply.

"Who are they?"

Ferrol went to his trunk, took out a pair of pistols,

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and balanced them lightly in his hands. "Good to confuse twenty men," he said. "A brace of 'em are bound to drop, and they don't know which one."

He raised a pistol lazily, and looked out along its barrel through the open, sunshiny window. Something in the pose of the body, in the curve of the arm, struck Nicolas strangely. He moved almost in front of Ferrol. There came back to him mechanically the remembrance of a piece of silver on the butt of one of the highwayman's pistols!

The same piece of silver was on the butt of Ferrol's pistol. It startled him; but he almost laughed to himself at the absurdity of the suggestion. Ferrol was the last man in the world to play a game like that, and with him.

Still he could not resist a temptation. He stepped in front of the pistol, almost touching it with his forehead, looking at Ferrol as he had looked at the highwayman last night.

"Look out, it's loaded!" said Ferrol, lowering the weapon coolly, and not showing by sign or muscle that he understood Lavilette's meaning. "I should think you'd had enough of pistols for one twenty-four hours."

"Do you know, Ferrol, you looked just then so like the robber last night that, for one moment, I half thought!— And the pistol, too, looks just the same— that silver piece on the butt!"

"Oh, yes, this piece for the name of the owner!" said Ferrol, in a laughing brogue, and he coughed a little. "Well, maybe some one did use this pistol last night. It wouldn't be hard to open my trunk. Let's see; whom shall we suspect?"

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to sit down on the side of the bed and rest himself against the foot-board.

"There's a new jug of medicine or cordial come this morning from Shangois, the notary," said Lavilette. "I just happened to think of it. What he does counts. He knows a lot."

Ferrol's eyes showed interest at once.

"I'll try it. I'll try it. The stuff Gatineau the miller sent doesn't do any good now."

"Shangois is here—he's downstairs—if you want to see him."

Ferrol nodded. He was tired of talking.

"I'm going," said Lavilette, holding out his hand. "I'll join my company to-day, and the scrimmage 'll begin as soon as we reach Papineau. We've got four hundred men."

Ferrol tried to say something, but he was struggling with the cough in his throat. He held out his hand, and Nicolas took it. At last he was able to say:

"Good luck to you, Nic, and to the devil with the Rebellion! You're in for a bad drubbing."

Nicolas had a sudden feeling of anger. This superior air of Ferrol's was assumed by most Englishmen in the country, and it galled him.

"We'll not ask quarter of Englishmen; no—*sacré!*" he said in a rage.

"Well, Nic, I'm not so sure of that. Better do that than break your pretty neck on a taut rope," was the lazy reply.

With an oath, Lavilette went out, banging the door after him. Ferrol shrugged his shoulder with a stoic *ennui*, and put away the pistols in the trunk. He was thinking how reckless he had been to take them out; and yet he was amused, too, at the risk he had run. A

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strange indifference possessed him this morning—indifference to everything. He was suffering reaction from the previous day's excitement. He had got the five thousand dollars, and now all interest in it seemed to have departed.

Suddenly he said to himself, as he ran a brush around his coat-collar:

"'Pon my soul, I forgot; this is my wedding day!—the great day in a man's life, the immense event, after which comes steady happiness or the devil to pay."

He stepped to the window and looked out. It was only six o'clock as yet. He could see the harvesters going to their labours in the fields of wheat and oats, the carters already bringing in little loads of hay. He could hear their *marche-'t'-en!* to the horses. Over by a little house on the river bank stood an old woman sharpening a sickle. He could see the flash of the steel as the stone and metal gently clashed.

Presently a song came up to him, through the garden below, from the house. The notes seemed to keep time to the hand of the sickle-sharpener. He had heard it before, but only in snatches. Now it seemed to pierce his senses and to flood his nerves with feeling.

The air was sensuous, insinuating, ardent. The words were full of summer and of that dramatic indolence of passion which saved the incident at Magon Farcinelle's from being as vulgar as it was treacherous. The voice was Christine's, on her wedding day.

"Oh, hark how the wind
(*And dark goes th*
Oh, see where the st rowe—
(*There's a rider*

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My soldier, he gave me no warning—
(*Oh, would that my lover might come!*)

"My kisses, my kisses are waiting—
(*Oh, the rider comes over the hill!*)
In summer the birds should be mating—
(*Oh, the harvest goes down to the mill!*)

"Oh, the rider, the rider he stayeth—
(*Oh, joy that my lover hath come!*)
We will journey together he sayeth—
(*No more with the bugle and drum!*)"

He caught sight of Christine for a moment as she passed through the garden towards the stable. Her gown was of white stuff, with little spots of red in it, and a narrow red ribbon was shot through the collar. Her hat was a pretty white straw, with red artificial flowers upon it. She wore at her throat a medallion brooch: one of the two heirlooms of the Lavilette family. It had belonged to the great-grandmother of Monsieur Louis Lavilette, and was the one security that this ambitious family did not spring up, like a mushroom, in one night. It had always touched Christine's imagination as a child. Some native instinct in her made her prize it beyond everything else. She used to make up wonderful stories about it, and tell them to Sophie, who merely wondered, and was not sure but that Christine was wicked; for were not these little romances little lies? Sophie's imagination was limited. As the years went on Christine finally got possession of the medallion, and held it against all opposition. Somehow, with it on this morning, she felt diminish the social distance between herself and Ferrol.

Ferrol himself thought nothing of social distance. Men, as a rule, get rather above that sort of thing. The woman: that was all that was in his mind. She

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was good to look at: warm, lovable, fascinating in her little daring wickednesses; a fiery little animal, full of splendid impulses, gifted with a perilous temperament: and she loved him. He had a kind of exultation at the very fierceness of her love for him, of what she had done to prove her love: her fury at Vanne Castine, the slaughter of the bear, and the intention to kill Vanne himself; and he knew that she would do more than that, if a great test came. Men feel surer of women than women feel of men.

He sat down on the broad window-ledge, still sipping his whiskey and milk, as he looked at her. She was very good to see. Presently she had to cross a little plot of grass. The dew was still on it. She gathered up her skirts and tip-toed quickly across it. The action was attractive enough, for she had a lithe smoothness of motion. Suddenly he uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"White stockings—humph!" he said.

Somehow those white stockings suggested the ironical comment of the world upon his proposed mésalliance; then he laughed good-humouredly.

"Taste is all a matter of habit, anyhow," said he to himself. "My own sister wouldn't have had any better taste if she hadn't been taught. And what am I? What am I? I drink more whiskey in a day than any three men in the country. I don't do a stroke of work; I've got debts all over the world; I've mulcted all my friends; I've made fools of two or three women in my time; I've broken every commandment except well, I guess I've broken every one, if it comes to that, in spirit, anyhow. I'm a thief, a fire-eating highwayman, begad, and here I am, with a perforated lung, going to

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world except what I stole! What beasts men are! The worst woman may be worse than the worst man, but all men are worse than most women. But she wants to marry me. She knows exactly what I am in health and prospects; so why shouldn't I?"

He drew himself up, thinking honestly. He believed that he would live if he married Christine; that his "cold" would get better; that the hole in his lung would heal. It was only a matter of climate; he was sure of it. Christine had a few hundred dollars—she had told him so. Suppose he took three hundred dollars of the five thousand dollars: that would leave four thousand seven hundred dollars for his sister. He could go away south with Christine, and could live on five or six hundred dollars a year; then he'd be fit for something. He could go to work. He could join the Militia, if necessary. Anyhow, he could get something to do when he got well.

He drank some more whiskey and milk. "Self-preservation, that's the thing; that's the first law," he said. "And more: if the only girl I ever loved, ever really loved—loved from the crown of her head to the sole of her feet—were here to-day, and Christine stood beside her, little plebeian with a big heart, by Heaven, I'd choose Christine. I can trust her, though she is a little liar. She loves, and she'll stick; and she's true—where she loves. Yes; if all the women in the world stood beside Christine this morning, I'd look them all over, from duchess to *danseuse,* and I'd say, 'Christine Lavilette, I'm a scoundrel. I haven't a penny in the world. I'm a thief; a thief who believes in you. You know what love is; you know what fidelity is. No matter what I did, you would stand by me to the end. To the last day of my life, I'll give you my heart and

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my hand; and as you are faithful to me, so I will be faithful to you, so help me God!'

"I don't believe I ever could have run straight in life. I couldn't have been more than four years old when I stole the peaches from my mother's dressing-table; and I lied just as coolly then as I could now. I made love to a girl when I was ten years old." He laughed to himself at the remembrance. "Her father had a foundry. She used to wear a red dress, I remember, and her hair was brown. She sang like a little lark. I was half mad about her; and yet I knew that I didn't really love her. Still, I told her that I did. I suppose it was the cursed falseness of my whole nature. I know that whenever I have said most, and felt most, something in me kept saying all the time: 'You're lying, you're lying, you're lying!' Was I born a liar? I wonder if the first words I ever spoke were a lie? I wonder, when I kissed my mother first, and knew that I was kissing her, if the same little devil that sits up in my head now, said then: 'You're lying, you're lying, you're lying.' It has said so enough times since. I loved to be with my mother; yet I never felt, even when she died—and God knows I felt bad enough then!—I never felt that my love was all real. It had some infernal note of falseness somewhere, some miserable, hollow place where the sound of my own voice, when I tried to speak the truth, mocked me! I wonder if the smiles I gave, before I was able to speak at all, were only blarney? I wonder, were they only from the wish to stand well with everybody, if I could? It must have been that; and how much I meant, and how much I

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always wanted, to do right, and the other side has always done wrong. I have sympathised with the just, but I have always felt that I'd like to help the criminal to escape his punishment. If I had been more real with that girl in New York, I wonder whether she wouldn't have stuck to me? When I was with her I could always convince her; but, I remember, she told me once that, when I was away from her, she somehow felt that I didn't really love her. That's always been the way. When I was with people, they liked me; when I was away from them, I couldn't depend upon them. No; upon my soul, of all the friends I've ever had, there's not one that I know of that I could go to now—except my sister, poor girl!—and feel sure that no matter what I did, they'd stick to me to the end. I suppose the fault is mine. If I'd been worth the standing by, I'd have been the better stood by. But this girl, this little French provincial, with a heart of fire and gold, with a touch of sin in her, and a thumping artery of truth, she would walk with me to the gallows, and give her life to save my life—yes, a hundred times. Well, then, I'll start over again; for I've found the real thing. I'll be true to her just as long as she's true to me. I'll never lie to her; and I'll do something else—something else. I'll tell her—"

He reached out, picked a wild rose from the vine upon the wall, and fastened it in his button-hole, with a defiant sort of smile, as there came a tap to his door.

"Come in," he said.

The door opened, and in stepped Shangois, the notary. He carried a jug under his arm, which, with a nod, he set down at the foot of the bed.

"M'sieu'," said he, "it is a thing that cured the bishop; and once, when a prince of France was at

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Quebec, and had a bad cold, it cured him. The whiskey in it I made myself—very good white wine."

Ferrol looked at the little man curiously. He had only spoken with him once or twice, but he had heard the numberless legends about him, and the Curé had told him many of his sayings, a little weird and sometimes maliciously true to the facts of life.

Ferrol thanked the little man, and motioned to a chair. There was, however, a huge chest against the wall near the window, and Shangois sat down on this, with his legs hunched up to his chin, looking at Ferrol with steady, inquisitive eyes. Ferrol laughed outright. A grotesque thought occurred to him. This little black notary was exactly like the weird imp which, he had always imagined, sat high up in his brain, dropping down little ironies and devilries—his personified conscience; or, perhaps, the truth left out of him at birth and given this form, to be with him, yet not of him.

Shangois did not stir, nor show by even the wink of an eyelid that he recognised the laughter, or thought that he was being laughed at.

Presently Ferrol sat down and looked at Shangois without speaking, as Shangois looked at him. He smiled more than once, however, as the thought recurred to him.

"Well?" he said at last.

"What if *she* finds out about the five thousand dollars—eh, m'sieu'?"

Ferrol was completely dumfounded. The brief question covered so much ground—showed a knowledge

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self-command, not to betray himself, but remained unmoved outwardly, and spoke calmly.

"Is that your business—to go round the parish asking conundrums?" he said coolly. "I can't guess the answer to that one, can you?"

Shangois hated cowards, and liked clever people: people who could answer him after his own fashion. Nearly everybody was afraid of his tongue and of him. He knew too much; which was a crime.

"I can find out," he replied, showing his teeth a little.

"Then you're not quite sure yourself, little devilkin?"

"The girl is a riddle. I am not the great reader of riddles."

"I didn't call you that. You're only a common little imp."

Shangois showed his teeth in a malicious smile.

"Why did you set me the riddle, then?" Ferrol continued, his eyes fixed with apparent carelessness on the other's face.

"I thought she might have told you the answer."

"I never asked her the puzzle. Have you?"

By instinct, and from the notary's reputation, Ferrol knew that he was in the presence of an honest man at least, and he waited most anxiously for an answer, for his fate might hang on it.

"M'sieu', I have not seen her since yesterday morning."

"Well, what would *you* do if you found out about the five thousand dollars?"

"I would see what happened to it; and afterwards I would see that a girl of Bonaventure did not marry a Protestant, and a thief."

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Ferrol rose from his chair, coughing a little. Walking over to Shangois, he caught him by both ears and shook the shaggy head back and forth.

"You little scrap of hell," he said in a rage, "if you ever come within fifty feet of me again I'll send you where you came from!"

Though Shangois's eyes bulged from his head, he answered:

"I was only ten feet away from you last night under the elm!"

Suddenly Ferrol's hand slipped down to Shangois's throat. Ferrol's fingers tightened, pressed inwards.

"Now, see, I know what you mean. Some one has robbed Nicolas Lavilette of five thousand dollars. You dare to charge me with it, curse you. Let me see if there's any more lies on your tongue!"

With the violence of the pressure Shangois's tongue was forced out of his mouth.

Suddenly a paroxysm of coughing seized Ferrol, and he let go and staggered back against the window ledge. Shangois was transformed—an animal. No human being had ever seen him as he was at this moment. The fingers of his one hand opened and shut convulsively, his arms worked up and down, his face twitched, his teeth showed like a beast's as he glared at Ferrol. He looked as though he were about to spring upon the now helpless man. But up from the garden below there came the sound of a voice—Christine's—singing.

His face quieted, and his body came to its natural pose again, though his eyes retained an active malice. He turned to go.

"Remember what I tell you," said F[illegible]

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a tiny little stream flowed down the corner of his mouth. Whenever he felt that warm fluid on his tongue he was certain of his doom, and the horror of slowly dying oppressed him, angered him. It begot in him a desire to end it all. He had a hatred of suicide; but there were other ways. "I'll have your life, or you'll have mine. I'm not to be played with," he added.

The sentences were broken by coughing, and his handkerchief was wet and red.

"It is no concern of the world," answered Shangois, stretching up his throat, for he still felt the pressure of Ferrol's fingers—"only of the girl and her brother. The girl—I saved her once before from your friend Vanne Castine, and I will save her from you—but, yes! It is nothing to the world, to Bonaventure, that you are a robber; it is everything to her. You are all robbers—you English—*cochons!*"

He opened the door and went out. Ferrol was about to follow him, but he had a sudden fit of weakness, and he caught up a pillow, and, throwing it on the chest where Shangois had sat, stretched himself upon it. He lay still for quite a long time, and presently fell into a doze. In those days no event made a lasting impression on him. When it was over it ended, so far as concerned any disturbing remembrances of it. He was awakened (he could not have slept for more than fifteen minutes) by a tapping at his door, and his name spoken softly. He went to the door and opened it. It was Christine. He thought she seemed pale, also that she seemed nervous; but her eyes were full of light and fire, and there was no mistaking the look in her face: it was all for him. He set down her agitation to the adventure they were about to make together. He

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stepped back, as if inviting her to enter, but she shook her head.

"No, not this morning. I will meet you at the old mill in half an hour. The parish is all mad about the Rebellion, and no one will notice or talk of anything else. I have the best pair of horses in the stable; and we can drive it in two hours, easy."

She took a paper from her pocket.

"This is—the—license," she added, and she blushed.

Then, with a sudden impulse, she stepped inside the room, threw her arms about his neck and kissed him, and he clasped her to his breast.

"My darling Tom!" she said, and then hastened away, with tears in her eyes.

He saw the tears. "I wonder what they were for?" he said musingly, as he opened up the official blue paper. "For joy?" He laughed a little uneasily as he said it.

His eyes ran through the document.

"*The Honourable Tom Ferrol, of Stavely Castle, County Galway, Ireland, bachelor, and Christine Marie Lavilette, of the Township of Bonaventure, in the Province of Lower Canada, spinster, Are hereby granted,*" etc., etc., etc., "*according to the laws of the Province of Upper Canada,*" etc., etc., etc.

He put it in his pocket.

"For better or for worse, then," he said, and descended the stairs.

Presently, as he went through the village, he noticed signs of hostility to himself. *Cries of Vive la Canada! Vive la France! à bas l'Anglais!* came to him out of the murmuring and excitement. But the Regimental Surgeon took off his cap to him, very ceremoniously

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"By the way, monsieur," the Regimental Surgeon added, as he took his leave, "I knew of this some days ago, and, being a justice of the peace, it was my duty to inform the authorities—yes of course! One must do one's duty in any case," he said, in imitation of English bluffness, and took his leave.

Ten minutes later Christine and Ferrol were on their way to the English province to be married.

That afternoon at three o'clock, as they left the little English-speaking village man and wife, they heard something which startled them both. It was a bear-trainer, singing to his bear the same weird song, without words, which Vanne Castine sang to Michael. Over in another street they could see the bear on his hind feet, dancing, but they could not see the man.

Christine glanced at Ferrol anxiously, for she was nervous and excited, though her face had also a look of exultant happiness.

"No, it's not Castine!" he said, as if in reply to her look.

In a vague way, however, she felt it to be ominous.

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CHAPTER XV

The village had no thought or care for anything except the Rebellion and news of it; and for several days Ferrol and Christine lived their new life unobserved by the people of the village, even by the household of Manor Casimbault.

It almost seemed that Ferrol's prophecy regarding himself was coming true, for his cheek took on a heightened colour, his step a greater elasticity, and he flung his shoulders out with a little of the old military swagger: cheerful, forgetful of all the world, and buoyant in what he thought to be his new-found health and permanent happiness.

Vague reports came to the village concerning the Rebellion. There were not a dozen people in the village who espoused the British cause; and these few were silent. For the moment the Lavilettes were popular. Nicolas had made for them a sort of *grand coup*. He had for the moment redeemed the snobbishness of two generations.

After his secret marriage, Ferrol was not seen in the village for some days, and his presence and nationality were almost forgotten by the people: they only thought of what was actively before their eyes. On the fifth day after his marriage, which was Saturday, he walked down to the village, attracted by shouting and unusual excitement. When he saw the cause of the demonstration he had a sudden flush of anger. A flag-staff had been erected in the centre of the village, and upon it had been run up the French tricolour. He stood and

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looked at the shouting crowd a moment, then swung round and went to the office of the Regimental Surgeon, who met him at the door. When he came out again he carried a little bundle under his left arm. He made straight for the crowd, which was scattered in groups, and pushed or threaded his way to the flag-staff. He was at least a head taller than any man there, and though he was not so upright as he had been, the lines of his figure were still those of a commanding personality. A sort of platform had been erected around the flag-staff and on it a drunken little habitant was talking treason. Without a word, Ferrol stepped upon the platform, and, loosening the rope, dropped the tricolour half-way down the staff before his action was quite comprehended by the crowd. Presently a hoarse shout proclaimed the anger and consternation of the habitants.

"Leave that flag alone," shouted a dozen voices. "Leave it where it is!" others repeated with oaths.

He dropped it the full length of the staff, whipped it off the string, and put his foot upon it. Then he unrolled the bundle which he had carried under his arm. It was the British flag. He slipped it upon the string, and was about to haul it up, when the drunken orator on the platform caught him by the arm with fiery courage.

"Here, you leave that alone: that's not our flag, and if you string it up, we'll string you up, bagosh!" he roared.

Ferrol's heavy walking-stick was in his right hand.

"Let go my arm—quick!" he said quietly.

He was no coward, and these people were, and he knew it. The habitant drew back.

"Get off the platform," he said with quiet menace.

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He turned quickly to the crowd, for some had sprung towards the platform to pull him off. Raising his voice, he said:

"Stand back, and hear what I've got to say. You're a hundred to one. You can probably kill me; but before you do that I shall kill three or four of you. I've had to do with rioters before. You little handful of people here—little more than half a million—imagine that you can defeat thirty-five millions with an army of half a million, a hundred battle-ships, ten thousand cannon and a million rifles. Come now, don't be fools. The Governor alone up there in Montreal has enough men to drive you all into the Bay of Fundy in a week. You think you've got the start of Colborne? Why, he has known every movement of Papineau and your rebels for the last two months. You can muster and riot to-day, but look out for to-morrow. I am the only Englishman here among you. Let me but warn you what your end will be! For every hair of my head there will be one less habitant in this province. You want to pull the British flag, and string up your prisoners in the British village while there is one Britisher to say, 'Put up that flag again!'—You fools!"

He suddenly gave the rope a pull, and the flag ran up half-way; but as he did so a stone was thrown. It flew past his head, grazing his temple. A sharp point lacerated the flesh, and the blood flowed down [illegible]. He ran the flag up to its full height, [illegible] the cord and put his back against [illegible] his stick he prepared himself fo[illegible]

"Mind what I say," he cried, "[illegible] comes will get what for!"

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in front of him. Three men were pushing their way through to him. Two of them were armed. They reached the platform and mounted it. It was the Regimental Surgeon and two British soldiers. The Regimental Surgeon held a paper in his hand.

"I have here," he said to the crowd, "a proclamation by Sir John Colborne. The rebels have been defeated at three points, and half of the men from Bonaventure who joined Papineau have been killed. The ringleader, Nicolas Lavilette, when found, will be put on trial for his life. Now, disperse to your homes, or every man of you will be arrested and tried by court-martial."

The crowd melted away like snow, and they hurried not the less because the stone which some one had thrown at Ferrol had struck a lad in the head, and brought him senseless and bleeding to the ground.

Ferrol picked up the tricolour and handed it to the Regimental Surgeon.

"I could have done it alone, I believe," he said; "and, upon my soul, I'm sorry for the poor devils. Suppose we were Englishmen in France, eh?"

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CHAPTER XVI

THE fight was over. The childish struggle against misrule had come to a childish end. The little toy loyalists had been broken all to pieces. A few thousand Frenchmen, with a vague patriotism, had shied some harmless stones at the British flag-staff on the citadel: that was all. Obeying the instincts of blood, religion, race, and language, they had made a haphazard, sidelong charge upon their ancient conquerors, had spluttered and kicked a little, and had then turned tail upon disaster and defeat. An incoherent little army had been shattered into fugitive factors, and every one of these hurried and scurried for a hole of safety into which he could hide. Some were mounted, but most were on foot.

Officers fared little better than men. It was "Save who can": they were all on a dead level of misfortune. Hundreds reached no cover, but were overtaken and driven back to British headquarters. In their terror, twenty brave rebels of two hours ago were to be captured by a single British officer of infantry speaking bad French.

Two of these hopeless fugitives were still fortunate enough to get a start of the hounds of retaliation and revenge. They were both mounted, and had far to go to reach their destination. Home was the one word in the mind of each; and they both came from Bonaventure.

The one was a tall, athletic young man, who had borne a captain's commission in Papineau's patriot army. He

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rode a sorel horse—a great, wiry raw-bone, with a lunge like a moose, and legs that struck the ground with the precision of a piston-rod. As soon as his nose was turned towards Bonaventure he smelt the wind of home in his nostrils; his hatchet head jerked till he got the bit straight between his teeth; then, gripping it as a fretful dog clamps the bone which his master pretends to wrest from him, he leaned down to his work, and the mud, the new-fallen snow and the slush flew like dirty sparks, and covered man and horse.

Above, an uncertain, watery moon flew in and out among the shifting clouds; and now and then a shot came through the mist and the half dusk, telling of some poor fugitive fighting, overtaken, or killed.

The horse neither turned head nor slackened gait. He was like a living machine, obeying neither call nor spur, but travelling with an unchanging speed along the level road, and up and down hill, mile after mile.

In the rider's heart were a hundred things; among them fear, that miserable depression which comes with the first defeats of life, the falling of the mercury from passionate activity to that frozen numbness which betrays the exhausted nerve and despairing mind. The horse could not go fast enough; the panic of flight was on him. He was conscious of it, despised himself for it; but he could not help it. Yet, if he were overtaken, he would fight; yes, fight to the end, whatever it might be.

Nicolas Lavilette had begun to unwind the coil of fortune and ambition which his mother had long been engaged in winding.

A mile or two behind was another horse and another rider. The animal was clean of limb, straight and shapely of body, with a leg like a lady's, and heart and wind to travel till she dropped. This mare the little

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black notary, Shangois, had [illegible]
side the tent of the English [illegible]
hung upon the wrist of [illegible]
and in his right hand he [illegible]
artillery officer, which [illegible]
field. He rode like a [illegible]
hound, his [illegible]
even with [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]
clearer [illegible]
the same [illegible]
saw the [illegible]
man hanging [illegible]
and if he had known [illegible]
gois had ridden to camp [illegible]
ture for two purposes: [illegible]
dollars from Ferrol and to save [illegible]
ing a highwayman. These reasons [illegible]
to Nic Lavilette, but other ulterior and [illegible]
were in his mind. He had no fear, no real fear
body shrank, but that was because [illegible]
used to rough riding and to peril

He foresaw a moment when he would stop, slide to the ground, and with his sabre kill one man—or more. Yes, he would kill one man. He had a devilish feeling of delight in thinking how he would do it, and how red the sabre would look when he had done it. He wished he had a hundred hands and a hundred sabres in those hands. More than once he had been in danger of his life, and yet he had had no fear.

He had in him the power of hatred; and he hated Ferrol as he had never hated anything in his life. He hated him as much as, in a furtive sort of way, he loved the rebellious, primitive and violent Christine.

As he rode on a hundred fancies passed through his brain, and they all had to do with killing or torturing. As a boy dreams of magnificent deeds of prowess, so he dreamed of deeds of violence and cruelty. In his life he had been secret, not vicious; he had enjoyed the power which comes from holding the secrets of others, and that had given him pleasure enough. But now, as if the true passion, the vital principle, asserted itself at the very last, so with the shadow of death behind him, his real nature was dominant. He was entirely sane, entirely natural, only malicious.

The night wore on, and lifted higher into the sky, and the grey dawn crept slowly up: first a glimmer, then a neutral glow, then a sort of darkness again, and presently the candid beginning of day.

As they neared the Parish of Bonaventure, Lavilette looked back again, and saw the little black notary a few hundred yards behind. He recognised him this time, waved a hand, and then called to his own fagged horse. Shangois's mare was not fagged; her heart and body were like steel.

Not a quarter of a mile behind them both were three

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of the twenty artillerymen. Lavilette came to the bridge shouting for Baby, the keeper. Baby recognised him, and ran to the lever even as the sorel galloped up. For the first time in the ride, Nic stuck spurs harshly into the sorel's side. With a grunt of pain the horse sprang madly on. A half-dozen leaps more and they were across, even as the bridge began to turn; for Baby had not recognised the little black notary, and supposed him to be one of Nic's pursuers; the others he saw further back in the road. It was only when Shangois was a third of the way across, that he knew the mare's rider. There was no time to turn the bridge back, and there was no time for Shangois to stop the headlong pace of the mare. She gave a wild whinny of fright, and jumped cornerwise, clear out across the chasm, towards the moving bridge. Her front feet struck the timbers, and then, without a cry, mare and rider dropped headlong down to the river beneath, swollen by the autumn rains.

Baby looked down and saw the mare's head thrust above the water, once, twice; then there was a flash of a sabre—and nothing more.

Shangois, with his dreams of malice and fighting, and the secrets of a half-dozen parishes strapped to his back, had dropped out of Bonaventure, as a stone crumbles from a bank into a stream, and many waters pass over it, and no one inquires whither it has gone, and no one mourns for it.

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CHAPTER XVII

On Sunday morning Ferrol lay resting on a sofa in a little room off the saloon. He had suffered somewhat from the bruise on his head, and while the Lavilettes, including Christine, were at mass, he remained behind, alone in the house, save for two servants in the kitchen. From where he lay he could look down into the village. He was thinking of the tangle into which things had got. Feeling was bitter against him, and against the Lavilettes also, now that the patriots were defeated. It had gone about that he had warned the Governor. The habitants, in their blind way, blamed him for the consequences of their own misdoing. They blamed Nicolas Lavilette. They blamed the Lavilettes for their friendship with Ferrol. They talked and blustered, yet they did not interfere with the two soldiers who kept guard at the home of the Regimental Surgeon. It was expected that the Curé would speak of the Rebellion from the altar this morning. It was also rumoured that he would have something to say about the Lavilettes; and Christine had insisted upon going. He laughed to think of her fury when he suggested that the Curé would probably have something unpleasant to say about himself. She would go and see to that herself, she said. He was amused, and yet he was not in high spirits, for he had coughed a great deal since the incident of the day before, and his strength was much weakened.

Presently he heard a footstep in the room, and turned over so that he might see. It was Sophie Farcinelle.

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Before he had time to speak or to sit up, she had dropped a hand on his shoulder. Her face was shame.

"You have been badly hurt, and I [illegible]," she said. "Why haven't you been to see me? I looked for you. I looked every day, and you didn't come, and—and I thought you had forgotten. Have you? Have you, Mr. Ferrol?"

He had raised himself on his elbow, and his face was near hers. It was not in him to resist the appealing of a pretty woman, and he had scarcely grasped the fact that he was a married man, his clandestine meetings with his wife having had, to this point, rather an air of adventure and irresponsibility. It is hard to say what he might have done or left undone; but, as Sophie's face was within an inch of his own, the door of the room suddenly opened, and Christine appeared. The indignation that had sent her back from mass to Ferrol was turned into another indignation now.

Sophie, frightened, turned round and met her infuriated look. She did not move, however.

"Leave this room at once. What do you want here?" Christine said, between gasps of anger.

"The room is as much mine as yours," answered Sophie, sullenly.

"The man isn't," retorted Christine, with a vicious snap of her teeth.

"Come, come," said Ferrol, in a soothing tone, rising from the sofa and advancing.

"What's he to you?" said Sophie, scornfully.

"My husband: that's all!" answered Christine. "And now, if you please, will you go to yours? You'll find him at mass. He'll have plenty of praying to do if he prays for you both—*voilà!*"

"Your husband!" said Sophie.

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dumfounded and miserable. "Is that so?" she added to Ferrol. "Is she—your wife?"

"That's the case," he answered, "and, of course," he added in a mollifying tone, "being my sister as well as Christine's, there's no reason why you shouldn't be alone with me in the room a few moments. Is there now?" he added to Christine.

The acting was clever enough, but not quite convincing, and Christine was too excited to respond to his blarney.

"He can't be your real husband," said Sophie, hardly above a whisper. "The Curé didn't marry you, did he?" She looked at Ferrol doubtfully.

"Well, no," he said; "we were married over in Upper Canada."

"By a Protestant?" asked Sophie.

Christine interrrupted. "What's that to you? I hope I'll never see your face again while I live. I want to be alone with my husband, and your husband wants to be alone with his wife: won't you oblige us and him —*hein?*"

Sophie gave Ferrol a look which haunted him while he lived. One idle afternoon he had sowed the seeds of a little storm in the heart of a woman, and a whirlwind was driving through her life to parch and make desolate the green fields of her youth and womanhood. He had loitered and dallied without motive; but the idle and unmeaning sinner is the most dangerous to others and to himself, and he realised it at that moment, so far as it was in him to realise anything of the kind.

Sophie's figure as it left the room had that drooping, beaten look which only comes to the stricken and the incurably humiliated.

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"What have you said to her?" asked Christine of Ferrol. "What have you done to her?"

"I didn't do a thing, upon my soul. I didn't say a thing. She [illegible] come in."

"What did she say to you?"

"As near as I can remember," she said, "You have been hurt, and I'm very sorry. Why haven't you been to see me? I looked for you; but you didn't come, and I thought you had forgotten me."

"What did she mean by that? How dared she?"

"See here, Christine," he said, laying his hand on her quivering shoulder, "I didn't say much to her. I was over there one afternoon, the afternoon I asked you to marry me. I drank a lot of liqueur; she looked very pretty, and before she had a chance to say yes or no about it I kissed her. Now that's a fact. I've never spent five minutes with her alone since; I haven't even seen her since, until this morning. Now that's the honest truth. I know it was scampish; but I never pretended to be good. It is nothing for you to make a fuss about, because, whatever I am—and it isn't much one way or another—I am all yours, straight as a die, Christine. I suppose, if we lived together fifty years, I'd probably kiss fifty women—once a year isn't a high average; but those kisses wouldn't mean anything; and you, you, my girl"—he bent his head down to her—"why, you mean everything to me, and I wouldn't give one kiss of yours for a hundred thousand of any other woman's in the world! What you've done for me, and what you'd do for me—"

[illegible] strange pathos in his voice, an uncom-

"Ah, come, come!" he said, with a touch of insinuating brogue, and kissed her. "Come, it's all right. I didn't mean anything, and she didn't mean anything; and let's start fresh again."

She looked up at him with quick intelligence.

"That's just what we'll have to do," she said. "The Curé this morning at mass scolded the people about the Rebellion, and said that Nic and you had brought all this trouble upon Bonaventure; and everybody looked at our pew and snickered. Oh, how I hate them all! Then I jumped up—"

"Well?" asked Ferrol, "and what then?"

"I told them that my brother wasn't a coward, and that you were my husband."

"And then—then what happened?"

"Oh, then there was a great fuss in the church, and the Curé said ugly things, and I left and came home quick. And now—"

"Well, and now?" Ferrol interrupted.

"Well, now we'll have to do something."

"You mean, to go away?" he asked, with a little shrug of his shoulder. She nodded her head.

He was depressed: he had had a hemorrhage that morning, and the road seemed to close in on him on all sides.

"How are we to live?" he asked, with a pitiful sort of smile.

She looked up at him steadily for a moment, without speaking. He did not understand the look in her eyes, until she said:

"You have that five thousand dollars!"

He drew back a step from her, and met her unwavering look a little fearfully. She knew that—she—!

"When did you find it out?" he asked.

"The morning we were married," she replied.

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"And you—you, Christine, you married me, a thief!" She nodded again.

"What difference could it make?" she asked. "I wouldn't have been happy if I hadn't married you. And I loved you!"

"Look here, Christine," he said, "that five thousand dollars is not for you or for me. You will be safe enough if anything should happen to me; your people would look after you, and you have some money in your own right. But I've a sister, and she's lame. She never had to do a stroke of work in her life, and she can't do it now. I have shared with her anything I have had since times went wrong with us and our family. I needed money badly enough, but I didn't care very much whether I got it for myself or not—only for her. I wanted that five thousand dollars for her, and to her it shall go; not one penny to you, or to me, or to any other human being. The Rebellion is over: that money wouldn't have altered things one way or another. It's mine, and if anything happens to me—"

He suddenly stooped down and caught her hands, looking her in the eyes steadily.

"Christine," he said, "I want you never to ask me to spend a penny of that money; and I want you to promise me, by the name of the Virgin Mary, that you'll see my sister gets it, and that you'll never let her or any one else know where it came from. Come, Christine, will you do it for me? I know it's very little indeed I give you, and you're giving me everything; but some people are born to be debtors in this world, and some to be creditors, and some give all and get little, because—"

She interrupted him.

"Because they love as I love you," she said, throwing

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her arms round his neck. "Show me where the money is, and I'll do all you say, if—"

"Yes, if anything happens to me," he said, and dropped his hand caressingly upon her head. He loved her in that moment.

She raised her eyes to his. He stooped and kissed her. She was still in his arms as the door opened and Monsieur and Madame Lavilette entered, pale and angry.

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CHAPTER XVIII

THAT night the British soldiers camped in the village. All over the country the rebels had been scattered and beaten, and Bonaventure had been humbled and injured. After the blind injustice of the fearful and the beaten, Nicolas Lavilette and his family were blamed for the miseries which had come upon the place. They had emerged from their isolation to tempt popular favour, had contrived many designs and ambitions, and in the midst of their largest hopes were humiliated, and were followed by resentment. The position was intolerable. In happy circumstances, Christine's marriage with Ferrol might have been a completion of their glory, but in reality it was the last blow to their progress.

In the dusk, Ferrol and Christine sat in his room: she, defiant, indignant, courageous; he hiding his real feelings, and knowing that all she now planned and arranged would come to naught. Three times that day he had had violent paroxysms of coughing; and at last had thrown himself on his bed, exhausted, helplessly wishing that something would end it all. Illusion had passed for ever. He no longer had a cold, but a mortal trouble that was killing him inch by inch. He remembered how a brother officer of his, dying of an incurable disease, and abhorring suicide, had gone into a café and slapped an unoffending bully and duellist in the face, inviting a combat. The end was sure, easy and honourable. For himself—he looked at Christine. Not all her abounding vitality, her warm, healthy body, or

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her overwhelming love, could give him one extra day of life, not one day. What a fool he had been to think that she could do so! And she must sit and watch him—she, with her primitive fierceness of love, must watch him sinking, fading helplessly out of life, sight and being.

A bottle of whiskey was beside him. During the two hours just gone he had drunk a whole pint of it. He poured out another half-glass, filled it up with milk, and drank it off slowly. At that moment a knock came to the door. Christine opened it, and admitted one of the fugitives of Nicolas's company of rebels. He saw Ferrol, and came straight to him.

"A letter for M'sieu' the Honourable," said he—"from M'sieu' le Capitaine Lavilette."

Ferrol opened the paper. It contained only a few lines. Nicolas was hiding in the store-room of the vacant farmhouse, and Ferrol must assist him to escape to the State of New York.

He had stolen into the village from the north, and, afraid to trust any one except this faithful member of his company, had taken refuge in a place where, if the worst came to the worst, he could defend himself, for a time at least. Twenty rifles of the rebels had been stored in the farmhouse, and they were all loaded! Ferrol, of course, could go where he liked, being a Britisher, and nobody would notice him. Would he not try to get him away?

While Christine questioned the fugitive, Ferrol thought the matter over. One thing he knew: the solution of the great problem had come; and the means to the solution ran through his head like lightning. He rose to his feet, drank off a few mouthfuls of undiluted whiskey, filled a flask and put it in his pocket. Then

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he found his pistols, and put on his greatcoat, muffler and cap, before he spoke a word.

Christine stood watching him intently.

"What are you going to do, Tom?" she said quietly.

"I am going to save your brother, if I can," was his reply, as he handed her Nic's letter.

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CHAPTER XIX

HALF an hour later, as Ferrol was passing from Louis Lavilette's stables into the road leading to the Seigneury he met Sophie Farcinelle, face to face. In a vague sort of way he was conscious that a look of despair and misery had suddenly wasted the bloom upon her cheek, and given to the large, cow-like eyes an expression of child-like hopelessness. An apathy had settled upon his nerves. He saw things as in a dream. His brain worked swiftly, but everything that passed before his eyes was, as it were, in a kaleidoscope, vivid and glowing, but yet intangible. His brain told him that here before him was a woman into whose life he had brought its first ordeal and humiliation. But his heart only felt a reflective sort of pity: it was not a personal or immediate realisation, that is, not at first.

He was scarcely conscious that he stood and looked at her for quite two minutes, without motion or speech on the part of either; but the dumb, desolate look in her eyes—a look of appeal, astonishment, horror and shame combined, presently clarified his senses, and he slowly grew to look at her as at his punishment, the punishment of his life. Before—always before—Sophie had been vague and indistinct: seen to-day, forgotten to-morrow; and previous to meeting her scores had affected his senses, affected them not at all deeply.

She was like a date in history to a boy who remembers that it meant something, but what, is not quite sure. But the meaning and definiteness were his own. Out of

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the irresponsibility of his nature, out of the moral ineptitude to which he had been born, moral knowledge came to him at last. Love had not done it; neither the love of Christine, as strong as death, nor the love of his sister, the deepest thing he ever knew—but the look of a woman wronged. He had inflicted on her the deepest wrong that may be done a woman. A woman can forgive passion and ruin, and worse, if the man loves her, and she can forgive herself, remembering that to her who loved much, much was forgiven. But out of wilful idleness, the mere flattery of the senses, a vampire feeding upon the spirits and souls of others, for nothing save emotion for emotion's sake—that was shameless, it was the last humiliation of a woman. As it were, to lose joy, and glow, and fervour of young, sincere and healthy life, to whip up the dying vitality and morbid brain of a consumptive!

All in a flash he saw it, realised it, and hated himself for it. He knew that as long as he lived, an hour or ten years, he never could redeem himself; never could forgive himself, and never buy back the life that he had injured. Many a time in his life he had kissed and ridden away, and had been unannoyed by conscience. But in proportion as conscience had neglected him before, it ground him now between the stones, and he saw himself as he was. Come of a gentleman's family, he knew he was no gentleman. Having learned the forms and courtesies of life, having infused his whole career with a spirit of gay *bonhomie*, he knew that in truth he was a swaggerer; that bad taste, infamous bad taste, had marked almost everything that he had done in his life. He had passed as one of the nobility, but he knew that all true men, all he had ever met, must have read him through and through. He had under-

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stood this before to a certain point, had read himself to a certain mark of gauge, but he had never been honestly and truly a man until this moment. His soul was naked before his eyes. It had been naked before, but he had laughed. Born without real remorse, he felt it at last. The true thing started within him. God, the avenger, the revealer and the healer, had held up this woman as a glass to him that he might see himself.

He saw her as she had been, a docile, soft-eyed girl, untouched by anything that defames or shames, and all in a moment the man that had never been in him until now, from the time he laughed first into his mother's eyes as a babe, spoke out as simply as a child would have spoken, and told the truth. There were no ameliorating phrases to soften it to her ears; there was no tact, there was no blarney, there was no suave suggestion now, no cheap gaiety, no cynicism of the social vampire —only the direct statement of a self-reproachful, dying man.

"I didn't fully know what I was doing," he said to her. "If I had understood then as I do now, I would never have come near you. It was the worst wickedness I ever did."

The new note in his voice, the new fashion of his words, the new look of his eyes, startled her, confused her. She could scarcely believe he was the same man. The dumb desolation lifted a little, and a look of understanding seemed to pierce her tragic apathy. As if a current of thought had been suddenly sent through her, she drew herself up with a little shiver, and looked at him as if she were about to speak; but instead of doing so, a strange, unhappy smile passed across her lips.

He saw that all the goodness of her nature was trying

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to arouse itself and assure him of forgiveness. It did not deceive him in the least.

"I won't be so mean now as to say I was weak," he added. "I was not weak; I was bad. I always felt I was born a liar and a thief. I've lied to myself all my life; and I've lied to other people because I never was a true man."

"A thief!" she said at last, scarcely above a whisper, and looking at him with a flash of horror in her eyes. "A thief!"

It was no use; he could not allow her to think he meant a thief in the vulgar, common sense, though that was what he was: just a common criminal.

"I have stolen the kind thoughts and love of people to whom I gave nothing in return," he said steadily. "There is nothing good in me. I used to think I was good-natured; but I was not, or I wouldn't have brought misery to a girl like you."

His truth broke down the barriers of her anger and despair. Something welled up in her heart: it may have been love, it may have been innocent womanliness.

"Why did you marry Christine?" she asked.

All at once he saw that she never could quite understand. Her stand-point would still, in the end, be the stand-point of a woman. He saw that she would have forgiven him, even had he not loved her, if he had not married Christine. For the first time he knew something, the real something, of a woman's heart. He had never known it before, because he had been so false himself. He might have been evil and had a conscience too: then he would have been wise. But he had been

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his life. He thought he had known Christine, but now he saw her in a new light, through the eyes of her sister from whose heart he had gathered a harvest of passion and affection, and had burnt the stubble and seared the soil forever. Sophie could never justify herself in the eyes of her husband, or in her own eyes, because this man did not love her. Even as he stood before her there, declaring himself to her as wilfully wicked in all that he had said and done, she still longed passionately for the thing that was denied her: not her lost truth back, but the love that would have compensated for her suffering, and in some poor sense have justified her in years to come. She did not put it into words, but the thought was bluntly in her mind. She looked at him, and her eyes filled with tears, which dropped down her cheek to the ground.

He was about to answer her question, when, all at once, her honest eyes looked into his mournfully, and she said with an incredible pathos and simplicity:

"I don't know how I am going to live on with Magon. I suppose I'll have to keep pretending till I die!"

The bell in the church was ringing for vespers. It sounded peaceful and quiet, as though no war, or rebellion, or misery and shame, were anywhere within the radius of its travel.

Just where they stood there was a tall calvary. Behind it was some shrubbery. Ferrol was going to answer her, when he saw, coming along the road, the Curé in his robes, bearing the host. In front of him trotted an acolyte, swinging the censer.

Ferrol quickly drew Sophie aside behind the bushes, where they should not be seen; for he was no longer reckless. He wished to be careful for the woman's sake.

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The Curé did not turn his head to the right or left, but came along chanting something slowly. The smell of the incense floated past them. When the priest and the lad reached the calvary they turned towards it, bowed, crossed themselves, and the lad rang a little silver bell. Then the two passed on, the lad still ringing. When they were out of sight the sound of the bell came softly, softly up the road, while the bell in the church tower still called to prayer.

The words the priest chanted seemed to ring through the air after he had gone.

> *"God have mercy upon the passing soul!*
> *God have mercy upon the passing soul!*
> *Hear the prayer of the sinner, O Lord;*
> *Listen to the voice of those that mourn;*
> *Have mercy upon the sinner, O Lord!"*

When Ferrol turned to Sophie again, both her hands were clasping the calvary, and she had dropped her head upon them.

"I must go," he said.

She did not move.

Again he spoke to her; but she did not lift her head.

Presently, however, as he stood watching her, she moved away from the calvary, and, with her back still turned to him, stepped out into the road and hurried on towards her home, never once turning her head.

He stood looking after her for a moment, then turned and, sit[illegible] [illegible]nd the shrubbery, he tore a few pi[illegible] [illegible] note-book and began writ-[illegible] [illegible] about twenty minutes [illegible]

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Ferrol seemed almost oblivious of the threatening crowd, which once or twice jostled him more than was accidental. He came into the post-office, got an envelope, put his letter inside it, stamped it, addressed it to Christine, and dropped it into the letter-box.

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CHAPTER XX

An hour later he stood among a few companies of British soldiers in front of the massive stone store-house of the Lavilettes' abandoned farmhouse, with its thick shuttered windows and its solid oak doors. It was too late to attempt the fugitive's escape, save by strategy. Over half an hour Nic had kept them at bay. He had made loopholes in the shutters and the door, and from these he fired upon his assailants. Already he had wounded five and killed two.

Men had been sent for timber to batter down the door and windows. Meanwhile, the troops stood at a respectful distance, out of the range of Nic's firing, awaiting developments.

Ferrol consulted with the officers, advising a truce and parley, offering himself as mediator to induce Nic to surrender. To this the officers assented, but warned him that his life might pay the price of his temerity. He laughed at this. He had been talking, with his head and throat well muffled, and the collar of his greatcoat drawn about his ears. Once or twice he coughed, a hacking, wrenching cough, which struck the ears of more than one of the officers painfully; for they had known him in his best and gayest days at Quebec.

It was arranged that he should advance, holding out a flag of truce. Before he went he drew aside one of the younger lieutenants, in whose home at Quebec his sister had always been a welcome visitor, and told him briefly the story of his marriage, of his wife and of

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Nicolas. He sent Christine a message, that she should not forget to carry his *last token to his sister!* Then turning, he muffled up his face against the crisp, harsh air (there was design in this also), and, waving a white handkerchief, advanced to the door of the store-room.

The soldiers waited anxiously, fearing that Nic would fire, in spite of all; but presently a spot of white appeared at one of the loopholes; then the door was slowly opened. Ferrol entered, and it was closed again.

Nicolas Lavilette grasped his hand.

"I knew you wouldn't go back on me," said he. "I knew you were my friend. What the devil do they want out there?"

"I am more than your friend: I'm your brother," answered Ferrol, meaningly. Then, quickly taking off his greatcoat, cap, muffler and boots: "Quick, on with these!" he said. "There's no time to lose!"

"What's all this?" asked Nic.

"Never mind; do exactly as I say, and there's a chance for you."

Nic put on the overcoat. Ferrol placed the cap on his head, and muffled him up exactly as he himself had been, then made him put on his own top-boots.

"Now, see," he said, "everything depends upon how you do this thing. You are about my height. Pass yourself off for me. Walk loose and long as I do, and cough like me as you go."

There was no difficulty in showing him what the cough was like: he involuntarily offered an illustration as he spoke.

"As soon as I shut the door and you start forward, I'll fire on them. That'll divert their attention from you. They'll take you for me, and think I've failed in persuading you to give yourself up. Go straight on—

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don't hurry—coughing all the time; and if you can make the dark, just beyond the soldiers, by the garden bench, you'll find two men. They'll help you. Make for the big tree on the Seigneury road—you know: where you were robbed. There you'll find the fastest horse from your father's stables. Then ride, my boy, ride for your life to the State of New York!"

"And you—you?" asked Nicolas.

Ferrol laughed.

"You needn't worry about me, Nic. I'll get out of this all right; as right as rain! Are you ready? Steady now, steady. Let me hear you cough."

Nic coughed.

"No, that isn't it. Listen and watch." Ferrol coughed. "Here," he said, taking something from his pocket, "open your mouth." He threw some pepper down the other's throat. "Now try it."

Nic coughed almost convulsively.

"Yes, that's it, that's it! Just keep that up. Come along now. Quick—not a moment to lose! Steady! You're all right, my boy; you've got nerve, and that's the thing. Good-bye, Nic, good luck to you!"

They grasped hands: the door opened swiftly, and Nic stepped outside. In an instant Ferrol was at the loophole. Raising a rifle, he fired, then again and again. Through the loophole he could see a half-dozen men lift a log to advance on the door as Nic passed a couple of officers, coughing hard, and making spasmodic motions with his hand, as though exhausted and unable to speak.

He fired again, and a soldier fell. The lust of fighting was on him now. It was not a question of country or of race, but only a man crowding the power of old instincts into the last moments of his life. The vigour and valour

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of a reconquered youth seemed to inspire him; he felt as he did when a mere boy fighting on the Danube. His blood rioted in his veins; his eyes flashed. He lifted the flask of whiskey and gulped down great mouthfuls of it, and fired again and again, laughing madly.

"Let them come on, let them come on," he cried. "By God, I'll settle them!" The frenzy of war possessed him. He heard the timber crash against the door—once, twice, thrice, and then give away. He swung round and saw men's faces glowing in the light of the fire, and then another face shot in before the others—that of Vanne Castine.

With a cry of fury he ran forward into the doorway. Castine saw him at the same moment. With a similar instinct each sprang for the other's throat, Castine with a knife in his hand.

A cry of astonishment went up from the officers and the men without. They had expected to see Nic; but Nic was on his way to the horse beneath the great elm tree, and from the elm tree to the State of New York—and safety.

The men and the officers fell back as Castine and Ferrol clinched in a death struggle. Ferrol knew that his end had come. He had expected it, hoped for it. But, before the end, he wanted to kill this man, if he could. He caught Castine's head in his hands, and, with a last effort, twisted it back with a sudden jerk.

All at once, with the effort, blood spurted from his mouth into the other's face. He shivered, tottered and fell back, as Castine struck blindly into space. For a moment Ferrol swayed back and forth, stretched out his hands convulsively and gasped, trying to speak, the blood welling from his lips. His eyes were wild, anxious and yearning, his face deadly pale and covered with

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AT THE SIGN OF THE EAGLE

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AT THE SIGN OF THE EAGLE

"Life in her creaking shoes
Goes, and more formal grows,
A round of calls and cues:
Love blows as the wind blows.
Blows! . . ."

"WELL, what do you think of them, Molly?" said Sir Duke Lawless to his wife, his eyes resting with some amusement on a big man and a little one talking to Lord Hampstead.

"The little man is affected, *gauche*, and servile. The big one picturesque and superior in a raw kind of way. He wishes to be rude to some one, and is disappointed because, just at the moment, Lord Hampstead is too polite to give him his cue. A dangerous person in a drawing-room, I should think; but interesting. You are a bold man to bring them here, Duke. Is it not awkward for our host?"

"Hampstead did it with his eyes open. Besides, there is business behind it—railways, mines, and all that; and Hampstead's nephew is going to the States fortune-hunting. Do you see?"

Lady Lawless lifted her eyebrows. "'To what base uses are we come, Horatio!' You invite me to dinner and—'I'll fix things up right.' That is the proper phrase, for I have heard you use it. Status for dollars. Isn't it low? I know you do not [illegible]y, Duke."

Sir Duke's eyes were [illegible]

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their conversation; and he did not reply immediately. Soon, however, he turned and looked down at his wife genially, and said: "Well, that's about it, I suppose. But really there is nothing unusual in this, so far as Mr. John Vandewaters is concerned, for in his own country he travels 'the parlours of the Four Hundred,' and is considered 'a very elegant gentleman.' We must respect a man according to the place he holds in his own community. Besides, as you suggest, Mr. Vandewaters is interesting. I might go further, and say that he is a very good fellow indeed."

"You will be asking him down to Craigruie next," said Lady Lawless, inquisition in her look.

"That is exactly what I mean to do, with your permission, my dear. I hope to see him laying about among the grouse in due season."

"My dear Duke, you are painfully Bohemian. I can remember when you were perfectly precise and exclusive, and—"

"What an awful prig I must have been!"

"Don't interrupt. That was before you went a-roving in savage countries, and picked up all sorts of acquaintances, making friends with the most impossible folk. I should never be surprised to see you drive Shon McGann—and his wife, of course—and Pretty Pierre—with some other man's wife—up to the door in a dog-cart; their clothes in a saddle-bag, or something less reputable, to stay a month. Duke, you have lost your decorum; you are a gipsy."

"I fear Shon McGann and Pierre wouldn't enjoy being with us as I should enjoy having them. You can never understand what a life that is out in Pierre's country. If it weren't for you and the bairn, I should be off there now. There is something of primeval man

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in me. I am never so healthy and happy, when away from you, as in prowling round the outposts of civilisation, and living on beans and bear's meat."

He stretched to his feet, and his wife rose with him. There was a fine colour on his cheek, and his eye had a pleasant fiery energy. His wife tapped him on the arm with her fan. She understood him very well, though pretending otherwise. "Duke, you are incorrigible. I am in daily dread of your starting off in the middle of the night, leaving me—"

"Watering your couch with your tears?"

"—and hearing nothing more from you till a cable from Quebec or Winnipeg tells me that you are on your way to the Arctic Circle with Pierre or some other heathen. But, seriously, where did you meet Mr. Vandewaters—Heavens, what a name!—and that other person? And what is the other person's name?"

"The other person carries the contradictory name of Stephen Pride."

"Why does he continually finger his face, and show his emotions so? He assents to everything said to him by an appreciative exercise of his features."

"My dear, you ask a great and solemn question. Let me introduce the young man, that you may get your answer at the fountain-head."

"Wait a moment, Duke. Sit down and tell me when and where you met these men, and why you have continued the acquaintance."

"Molly," he said, obeying her, "you are a terrible inquisitor, and the privacy of one's chamber were the kinder place to call one to account. But I bend to your implacability. . . . Mr. Vandewaters, like myself, has a taste for roving, though our aims are not

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and pleasure. He is not a thorough sportsman—there is always a certain amount of enthusiasm, even in the unrewarded patience of the true hunter;—but he sufficeth. Well, Mr. Vandewaters had been hunting in the far north, and looking after a promising mine at the same time. He was on his way south at one angle, I at another angle, bound for the same point. Shon McGann was with me; Pierre with Vandewaters. McGann left me, at a certain point, to join his wife at a Barracks of the Riders of the Plains. I had about a hundred miles to travel alone. Well, I got along the first fifty all right. Then came trouble. In a bad place of the hills I fell and broke an ankle bone. I had an Eskimo dog of the right sort with me. I wrote a line on a bit of birch bark, tied it round his neck, and started him away, trusting my luck that he would pull up somewhere. He did. He ran into Vandewaters's camp that evening. Vandewaters and Pierre started away at once. They had dogs, and reached me soon. It was the first time I had seen Pierre for years. They fixed me up, and we started south. And that's as it was in the beginning with Mr. John Vandewaters and me."

Lady Lawless had been watching the two strangers during the talk, though once or twice she turned and looked at her husband admiringly. When he had finished she said: "That is very striking. What a pity it is that men we want to like spoil all by their lack of form!"

"Don't be so sure about Vandewaters. Does he look flurried by these surroundings?"

"No. He certainly has an air of contentment. It is, I suppose, the usual air of self-made Americans."

"Go to London, E.C., and you will find the same.

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plus smugness. Now, Mr. Vandewaters has real power —and taste too, as you will see. Would you think Mr. Stephen Pride a self-made man?"

"I cannot think of any one else who would be proud of the patent. Please to consider the seals about his waistcoat, and the lady-like droop of his shoulders."

"Yet he is thought to be a young man of parts. He has money, made by his ancestors; he has been round the world; he belongs to societies for culture and—"

"And he will rave of the Poet's Corner, ask if one likes *Pippa Passes*, and expect to be introduced to every woman in the room at a tea-party, to say nothing of proposing impossible things, such as taking one's girl friends to the opera alone, sending them boxes of confectionery, and writing them dreadfully reverential notes at the same time. Duke, the creature is impossible, believe me. Never, never, if you love me, invite him to Craigruie. I met one of his tribe at Lady Macintyre's when I was just out of school; and at the dinner-table, when the wine went round, he lifted his voice and asked for a cup of tea, saying he never 'drank.' Actually he did, Duke."

Her husband laughed quietly. He had a man's enjoyment of a woman's dislike of bad form. "A common criminal man, Molly. Tell me, which is the greater crime: to rob a bank or use a fish-knife for asparagus?"

Lady Lawless fanned herself. "Duke, you make me hot. But if you will have the truth: the fish-knife business by all means. Nobody need feel uncomfortable about the burglary, except the burglar; but see what a position for the other person's hostess."

"My dear, women have no civic virtues. Their *credo* is, 'I believe in beauty and fine linen, and the thing that is not *gauche*.'"

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His wife was smiling. "Well, have it your own way. It is a creed of comfort, at any rate. And now, Duke, if I must meet the man of mines and railways and the spare person making faces at Lord Hampstead, let it be soon, that it may be done with; and pray don't invite them to Craigruie till I have a chance to speak with you again. I will not have impossible people at a house-party."

"What a difficult fellow your husband is, Molly!"

"Difficult; but perfectly possible. His one fault is a universal sympathy which shines alike on the elect—and the others."

"So. Well, this is our dance. After it is over, prepare for the Americanos."

Half-an-hour later Mr. Vandewaters was standing in a conspicuous corner talking to Lady Lawless.

"It is, then, your first visit to England?" she asked.

He had a dry, deliberate voice, unlike the smooth, conventional voices round him. "Yes, Lady Lawless," he replied: "it's the first time I've put my foot in London town, and—perhaps you won't believe it of an American—I find it doesn't take up a very conspicuous place."

The humour was slightly accentuated, and Lady Lawless shrank a little, as if she feared the depths of divertisement to which this speech might lead; but a quick look at the man assured her of his common-sense, and she answered: "It is of the joys of London that no one is so important but finds the space he fills a small one, which may be filled acceptably by some one else at any moment. It is easy for kings and princes even—we have secluded princes here now—to get lost and forgotten in London."

"Well, that leaves little chance for ordinary Americans, who don't bank on titles."

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She looked up, puzzled in spite of herself. But she presently said, with frankness and *naïveté:* "What does 'bank on titles' mean?"

He stroked his beard, smiling quaintly, and said: "I don't know how to put the thing better—it seems to fill the bill. But, anyway, Americans are republicans, and don't believe in titles, and—"

"O, pardon me," she interrupted: "of course, I see."

"We've got little ways of talking not the same as yours. You don't seem to have the snap to conversation that we have in the States. But I'll say here that I think you have got a better style of talking. It isn't exhausting."

"Mr. Pride said to me a moment ago that they spoke better English in Boston than any other place in the world."

"Did he, though, Lady Lawless? That's good. Well, I guess he was only talking through his hat."

She was greatly amused. Her first impressions were correct. The man was interesting. He had a quaint, practical mind. He had been thrown upon his own resources, since infancy almost, in a new country; and he had seen with his own eyes, nakedly, and without predisposition or instruction. From childhood thoroughly adaptable, he could get into touch with things quickly, and instantly like or dislike them. He had been used to approach great concerns with fearlessness and competency. He respected a thing only for its real value, and its intrinsic value was as clear to him as the market value. He had, perhaps, an exaggerated belief in the greatness of his own country, because liked eagerness and energy and daring. The and hurry of American life added to his en They acted on him like a stimulati

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was always bold, collected, and steady. He felt an exhilaration in being superior to the rustle of forces round him. It had been his habit to play the great game of business with decision and adroitness. He had not spared his opponent in the fight; he had crushed where his interests were in peril and the sport played into his hands; comforting himself, if he thought of the thing, with the knowledge that he himself would have been crushed if the other man had not. He had never been wilfully unfair, nor had he used dishonourable means to secure his ends: his name stood high in his own country for commercial integrity; men said he "played square." He had, maybe, too keen a contempt for dulness and incompetency in enterprise, and he loathed red-tape; but this was racial. His mind was as open as his manners. He was utterly approachable. He was a millionaire, and yet in his own offices in New York he was as accessible as a President. He handled things without gloves, and this was not a good thing for any that came to him with a weak case. He had a penetrating intelligence; and few men attempted, after their first sophistical statements, to impose upon him: he sent them away unhappy. He did not like England altogether: first, because it lacked, as he said, enterprise; and because the formality, decorum and excessive convention fretted him. He saw that in many things the old land was backward, and he thought that precious time was being wasted. Still, he could see that there were things, purely social, in which the Londoners were at advantage; and he acknowledged this when he said, concerning Stephen Pride's fond boast, that he was "talking through his hat."

Lady Lawless smiled, and after a moment rejoined:

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"Does it mean that he was mumming, as it were, like a conjurer?"

"Exactly. You are pretty smart, Lady Lawless; for I can see that, from your stand-point, it isn't always easy to catch the meaning of sayings like that. But they do hit the case, don't they?"

"They give a good deal of individuality to conversation," was the vague reply. "What, do you think, is the chief lack in England?"

"Nerve and enterprise. But I'm not going to say you ought to have the same kind of nerve as ours. We are a different tribe, with different surroundings, and we don't sit in the same kind of saddle. We ride for all we're worth all the time. You sit back and take it easy. We are never satisfied unless we are behind a fast trotter; you are content with a good cob that steps high, tosses its head, and has an aristocratic stride."

"Have you been in the country much?" she asked, without any seeming relevancy.

He was keen enough. He saw the veiled point of her question. "No: I've never been in the country here," he said. "I suppose you mean that I don't see or know England till I've lived there."

"Quite so, Mr. Vandewaters." She smiled to think what an undistinguished name it was. It suggested pumpkins in the front garden. Yet here its owner was perfectly at his ease, watching the scene before him with good-natured superiority. "London is English; but it is very cosmopolitan, you know," she added; "and I fancy you can see it is not a place for fast trotters. The Park would be too crowded for that—even if one wished to drive a Maud S."

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"What do you know of Maud S? I didn't think you would be up in racing matters."

"You forget that my husband is a traveller, and an admirer of Americans and things American."

"That's so," he answered; "and a staving good traveller he is. You don't catch him asleep, I can tell you, Lady Lawless. He has stuff in him."

"The stuff to make a good American?"

"Yes; with something over. He's the kind of Englishman that can keep cool when things are ticklish, and look as if he was in a parlour all the time. Americans keep cool, but look cheeky. O, I know that. We square our shoulders and turn out our toes, and push our hands into our pockets, and act as if we owned the world. Hello—by Jingo!" Then, apologetically: "I beg your pardon, Lady Lawless; it slipped."

Lady Lawless followed Mr. Vandewaters's glance, and saw, passing on her husband's arm, a tall, fascinating girl. She smiled meaningly to herself, as she sent a quick quizzical look at the American, and said, purposely misinterpreting his exclamation: "I am not envious, Mr. Vandewaters."

"Of course not. That's a commoner thing with us than with you. American girls get more notice and attention from their cradles up, and they want it all along the line. You see, we've mostly got the idea that an Englishman expects from his wife what an American woman expects from her husband."

"How do Americans get these impressions about us?"

"From our newspapers, I guess; and the newspapers take as the ground-work of their belief the Bow Street cases where Englishmen are cornered for beating their wives."

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"Suppose we were to judge of American Society by the cases in a Chicago Divorce Court?"

"There you have me on toast. That's what comes of having a husband who takes American papers. Mind you, I haven't any idea that the American papers are right. I've had a lot to do with newspapers, and they are pretty ignorant, I can tell you—cheap all round. What's a newspaper, anyway, but an editor, more or less smart and overworked, with an owner behind him who has got some game on hand? I know: I've been there."

"How have you 'been there'?"

"I've owned four big papers all at once, and had fifty others under my thumb."

Lady Lawless caught her breath; but she believed him. "You must be very rich."

"Owning newspapers doesn't mean riches. It's a lever, though, for tipping the dollars your way."

"I suppose they have—tipped your way?"

"Yes: pretty well. But, don't follow this lead any farther, Lady Lawless, or you may come across something that will give you a start. I should like to keep on speaking terms with you."

"You mean that a man cannot hold fifty newspapers under his thumb, and live in the glare of a search-light also?"

"Exactly. You can't make millions without pulling wires."

She saw him watching the girl on her husband's arm. She had the instinct of her sex. She glanced at the stately girl again; then at Mr. Vandewaters critically, and rejoined, quizzically: "Did you—make millions?"

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"To get them back on the London market?"

"That's why I am here."

"You have not come in vain?"

"I could tell you better in a month or so from now. In any case, I don't stand to lose. I've come to take things away from England."

"I hope you will take away a good opinion of it."

"If there'd been any doubt of it half an hour ago, it would be all gone this minute."

"Which is nice of you; and not in your usual vein, I should think. But, Mr. Vandewaters, we want you to come to Craigruie, our country place, to spend a week. Then you will have a chance to judge us better, or rather more broadly and effectively." She was looking at the girl, and at that moment she caught Sir Duke's eye. She telegraphed to him to come.

"Thank you, Lady Lawless, I'm glad you have asked me. But—" He glanced to where Mr. Pride was being introduced to the young lady on Sir Duke's arm, and paused.

"We are hoping," she added, interpreting his thought, and speaking a little dryly, "that your friend, Mr. Stephen Pride"—the name sounded so ludicrous—"will join us."

"He'll be proud enough, you may be sure. It's a singular combination, Pride and myself, isn't it? But, you see, he has a fortune which, as yet, he has never been able to handle for himself; and I do it for him. We are partners, and, though you mightn't think it, he has got more money now than when he put his dollars at my disposal to help me make a few millions at a critical time."

Lady Lawless let her fan touch Mr. Vandewaters's arm. "I am going to do you a great favour. You see

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that young lady coming to us with my husband? Well, I am going to introduce you to her. It is such as she—such women—who will convince you—"

"Yes?"

"—that you have yet to make your—what shall I call it?—Ah, I have it: your 'biggest deal,'—and, in truth, your best."

"Is that so?" rejoined Vandewaters musingly. "Is that so? I always thought I'd make my biggest deal in the States. Who is she? She is handsome."

"She is more than handsome, and she is the Honourable Gracia Raglan."

"I don't understand about 'The Honourable.'"

"I will explain that another time."

A moment later Miss Raglan, in a gentle bewilderment, walked down the ballroom on the arm of the millionaire, half afraid that something *gauche* would happen; but by the time she had got to the other end was reassured, and became interested.

Sir Duke said to his wife in an aside, before he left her with Mr. Vandewaters's financial partner: "What is your pretty conspiracy, Molly?"

"Do talk English, Duke, and do not interfere."

A few hours later, on the way home, Sir Duke said: "You asked Mr. Pride too?"

"Yes; I grieve to say."

"Why grieve?"

"Because his experiences with us seem to make him dizzy. He will be terribly in earnest with every woman in the house, if—"

"If you do not keep him in line yourself?"

"Quite so. And the creature is not even interesting."

"Cast your eye about. He has millions; you have cousins."

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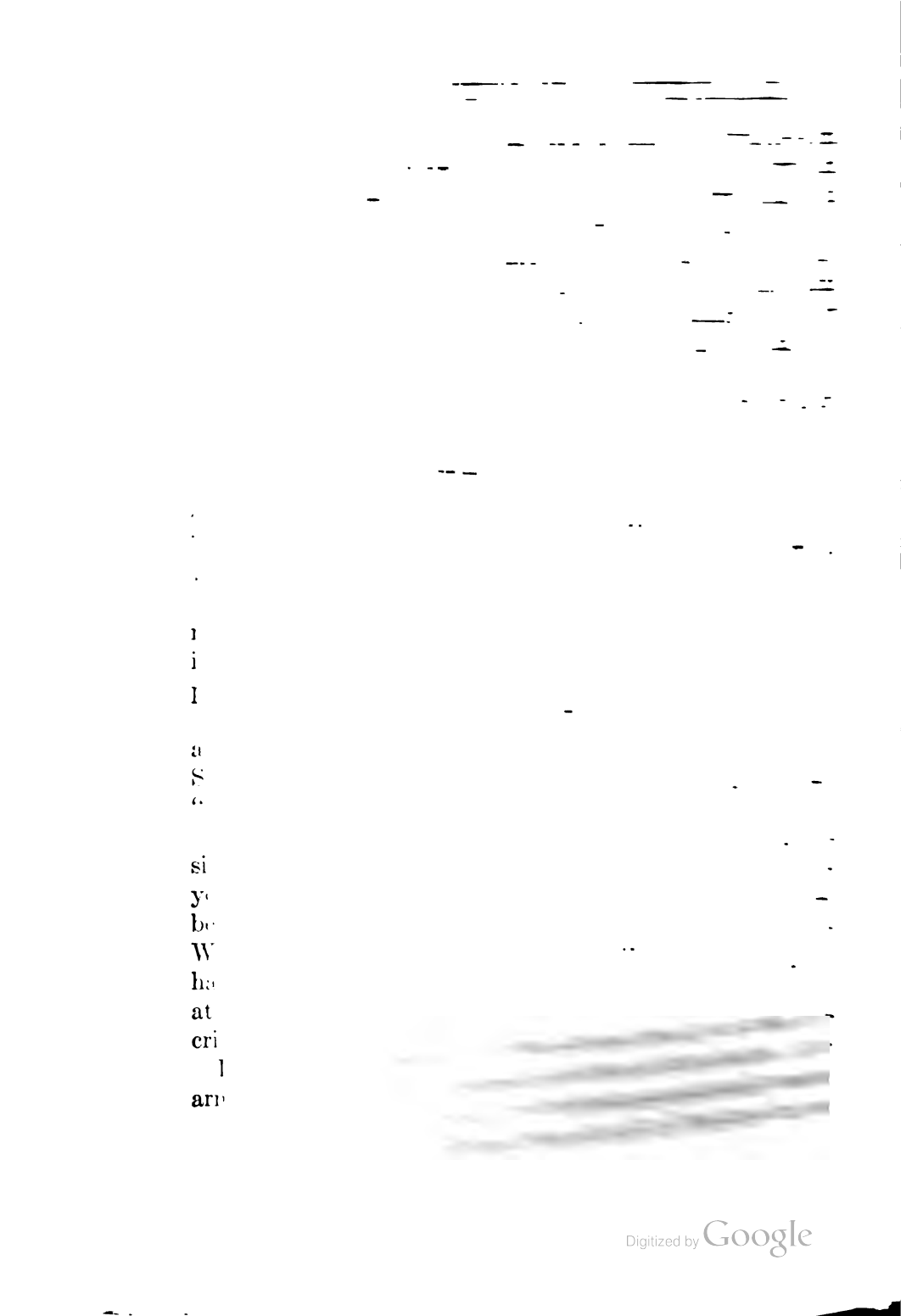

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backwards, and was smart at French. He insisted on bringing out the good qualities of his comrade; but he gave him much strong advice privately. He would have done it just the same at the risk of losing a fortune, were it his whim—he would have won the fortune back in due course.

At the present time Mr. Vandewaters was in the heat of some large commercial movements. No one would have supposed it, save for the fact that telegrams and cablegrams were brought to him day and night. He had liberally salaried the telegraph-clerk to work after hours, simply to be at his service. The contents of these messages never shook his equanimity. He was quiet, urbane, dry-mannered, at all times. Mr. Pride, however, was naturally excitable. He said of himself earnestly that he had a sensitive nature. He said it to Mrs. Gregory Thorne, whose reply was: "Dear me, and when things are irritating and painful to you do you never think of suicide?" Then she turned away to speak to some one, as if she had been interrupted, and intended to take up the subject again; but she never did. This remark caused Mr. Pride some nervous moments. He was not quite sure how she meant it. But it did not depress him as it might otherwise have done, for his thoughts were running much in another channel with a foolish sort of elation.

As Lady Lawless had predicted, he was assiduously attentive to her, and it needed all her tact and cheerful frankness to keep him in line. She managed it very well: Mr. Pride's devotion was not too noticeable to the other guests. She tried to turn his [illegible] some pretty girls; but, although there w[illegible] who might, in some weak moments, have

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them on the terrace and oppress them with his lisping egotism. Every one hinted that he seemed an estimable, but trying, young man; and, as Sir Duke said to his wife, the men would not have him at any price.

As for Mr. Vandewaters and Gracia Raglan, Lady Lawless was not very sure that her delicate sympathy was certain of reward. The two were naturally thrown together a good deal; but Miss Raglan was a girl of singular individuality and high-mindedness, and she was keen enough to see from the start what Lady Lawless suspected might happen. She did not resent this, —she was a woman;—but it roused in her a spirit of criticism, and she threw up a barrier of fine reserve, which puzzled Mr. Vandewaters. He did not see that Lady Lawless was making a possible courtship easy for him. If he had, it would have made no difference: he would have looked at it as at most things, broadly. He was not blind to the fact that his money might be a "factor"; but, as he said to himself, his millions were a part of him—they represented, like whist-counters, so much pluck and mother-wit. He liked the general appreciation of them: he knew very well that people saw him in them and them in him. Miss Raglan attracted him from the moment of meeting. She was the first woman of her class that he had ever met closely; and the possibility of having as his own so adorable a comrade was inspiring. He sat down sometimes as the days went on—it was generally when he was shaving—and thought upon his intention regarding Miss Raglan, in relation to his humble past; for he had fully made up his mind to marry her, if she would have him. He wondered what she would think when he told her of his life; and he laughed at the humour of the situ-

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ation. He had been into Debrett, and he knew that she could trace her family back to the Crusades.

He determined to make a clean breast of it. One day he was obliged to remain at the house in expectation of receiving important telegrams, and the only people who appeared at lunch were Lady Lawless, Mrs. Gregory Thorne (who was expecting her husband), Miss Raglan, Pride, and himself. While at luncheon he made up his mind to have a talk with Miss Raglan. In the library after luncheon the opportunity was given. It was a warm, pleasant day, and delightful in the grounds.

After one or two vain efforts to escape, Mrs. Gregory Thorne and Lady Lawless resigned themselves to the attentions of Mr. Pride; and for once Lady Lawless did not check Mrs. Thorne's irony. It was almost a satisfaction to see Mr. Pride's bewildered looks, and his inability to know whether or not he should resent (whether it would be proper to resent) this softly-showered satire.

Mr. Vandewaters and Gracia Raglan talked more freely than they had ever done before.

"Do you really like England?" she said to him; then, waving her hand lightly to the beeches and the clean-cropped grass through the window, "I mean do you like our 'trim parterres,' our devotion to mere living, pleasure, sport, squiring, and that sort of thing?"

He raised his head, glanced out, drew in a deep breath, thrust his hands down in the pockets of his coat, and looking at her with respectful good humour, said: "Like it? Yes, right down to the ground. Why shouldn't I! It's the kind of place I should like to come to in my old days. You needn't die in a hurry here. See?"

"Are you sure you would not be like the old sailors

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who must live where they can scent the brine? You have been used to an active, adventurous, hurried life. Do you think you could endure this humdrum of enjoyment?"

It would be hard to tell quite what was running in Gracia Raglan's mind, and, for the moment, she herself hardly knew; but she had a sudden, overmastering wish to make the man talk: to explore and, maybe, find surprising—even trying—things. She was astonished that she enjoyed his society so keenly. Even now, as she spoke, she remembered a day and a night since his coming, when he was absent in London; also how the party seemed to have lost its character and life, and how, when Mr. Pride condescended, for a few moments, to decline from Lady Lawless upon herself, she was even pleasant to him, making him talk about Mr. Vandewaters, and relishing the enthusiastic loyalty of the supine young man. She, like Lady Lawless, had learned to see behind the firm bold exterior, not merely a notable energy, force, self-reliance, and masterfulness, but a native courtesy, simplicity, and refinement which surprised her. Of all the men she knew not a half-dozen had an appreciation of nature or of art. They affected art, and some of them went to the Academy or the private views in Bond Street; but they had little feeling for the business; they did it in a well-bred way, with taste, but not with warmth.

Mr. Vandewaters now startled her by quoting suddenly lines from an English poet unknown to her. By chance she was turning over the Academy pictures of the year, and came at last to one called "A Japanese Beauty of Old Days"—an exquisite thing.

"Is it not fascinating?" she said. "So piquant and fresh."

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He gave a silent laugh, as was his custom when he enjoyed anything, and then replied:

"I came across a little book of verses one day in the States. A friend of mine, the president of a big railway, gave it to me. He does some painting himself when he travels in his Pullman in the Rockies. Well, it had some verses on just such a picture as that. Hits it off right, Miss Raglan."

"Verses?" she remarked, lifting her eyebrows. She expected something out of the "poet's corner" of a country newspaper. "What are they?"

"Well, one's enough to show the style. This is it:

> "'Was I a Samurai renowned,
> Two-sworded, fierce, immense of bow?
> A histrion angular and profound?
> A priest? or porter? Child, although
> I have forgotten clean, I know
> That in the shade of Fujisan,
> What time the cherry-orchards blow,
> I loved you once in old Japan.'"

The verse on the lips of Mr. Vandewaters struck her strangely. He was not like any man she had known. Most self-made Englishmen, with such a burly exterior and energy, and engaged in such pursuits, could not, to save themselves from hanging, have impressed her as Mr. Vandewaters did. There was a big round sympathy in the tone, a timbre in the voice, which made the words entirely fitting. Besides, he said them without any kind of affectation, and with a certain turn of dry humour, as if he were inwardly laughing at the idea of the poem.

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you think there would be much amusement in living half-a-dozen times, or even twice, unless you were quite sure that you remembered everything? This gentleman was peculiarly fortunate to recall Fujisan, and the orange orchards—and the girl."

"I believe you are right. One life is about enough for most of us. Memory is all very fine; but you'd want a life set apart for remembering the others after awhile."

"Why do you not add, 'And that would bore one?' Most of the men I know would say so."

"Well, I never used the word that way in my life. When I don't like a thing, that ends it—it has got to go."

"You cannot do that with everything."

"Pretty much, if I set my mind to it. It is astonishing how things'll come round your way if you keep on thinking and willing them so."

"Have you always got everything you wanted?"

He had been looking off into the grounds through the open window. Now he turned slowly upon her.

"So far I have got everything I set my mind to get. Little things don't count. You lose them sometimes because you want to work at something else; sometimes because, as in cards, you are throwing a few away to save the whole game."

He looked at her, as she thought, curiously. In his mind he was wondering if she knew that he had made up his mind to marry her. She was suddenly made aware of the masterfulness of his spirit, which might, she knew, be applied to herself.

"Let us go into the grounds," he added, all at once.

Soon after, in the shade of the trees, she broke in upon the thread of their casual conversation. "A few

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moments ago," she murmured, "you said: 'One life is about enough for most of us.' Then you added a disparaging remark about memory. Well, that doesn't seem like your usual point of view—more like that of Mr. Pride; but not so plaintive, of course. Pray do smoke," she added, as, throwing back his coat, he exposed some cigars in his waistcoat pocket. "I am sure you always smoke after lunch."

He took out a cigar, cut off the end, and put it in his mouth. But he did not light it. Then he glanced up at her with a grave quizzical look as though wondering what would be the effect of his next words, and a smile played at his lips.

"What I meant was this. I think we get enough out of our life to last us for centuries. It's all worth doing from the start, no matter what it is: working, fighting, marching and countermarching, plotting and counterplotting, backing your friends and hating your foes, playing big games and giving others a chance to, standing with your hand on the lynch-pin, or pulling your head safe out of the hot-pot. But I don't think it is worth doing twice. The interest wouldn't be fresh. For men and women and life, with a little different dress, are the same as they always were; and there's only the same number of passions working now, as at the beginning. I want to live life up to the hilt; because it is all new as I go on; but never twice."

"Indeed?" She looked at him earnestly for a moment, and then added: "I should think you would have seen lost chances; and doing things a second time might do them better."

"I never missed chances," he replied simply: "never

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"Oh!" There was a kind of dubiousness in her tone.

He noticed it. "You can hardly understand, Miss Raglan. Fact is, it was one of those deals when you can make a million, in a straight enough game; but it comes out of another man—one, maybe, that you don't know; who is playing just the same as you are. I have had a lot of sport; but I've never crippled any one man, when my engine has been dead on him. I have played more against organisations than single men."

"What was the most remarkable chance you ever had to make a million, and did not?"

He threw back his head, smiling shrewdly. "When by accident my enemy got hold of a telegram meant for me. I was standing behind a frosted glass door, and through the narrow bevel of clear glass I watched him read it. I never saw a struggle like that. At last he got up, snatched an envelope, put the telegram inside, wrote my name, and called a messenger. I knew what was in the message. I let the messenger go, and watched that man for ten minutes. It was a splendid sight. The telegram had given him a big chance to make a million or two, as he thought. But he backed himself against the temptation, and won. That day I could have put the ball into his wicket; but I didn't. That's a funny case of the kind."

"Did he ever know?"

"He didn't. We are fighting yet. He is richer than I am now, and at this moment he's playing a hard game straight at several interests of mine. But I reckon I can stop him."

"You must get a great deal out of life," she said. "Have you always enjoyed it so?" She was thinking it would be strange to live in contact with such events very closely. It was so like adventure.

"Always—from the start."

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"Tell me something of it all, won't you?"

He did not hesitate.

"I was born in a little place in Maine. My mother was a good woman, they said—straight as a die all her life. I can only remember her in a kind of dream, when she used to gather us children about the big rocking-chair, and pray for us, and for my father, who was away most of the time, working in the timber-shanties in the winter, and at odd things in the summer. My father wasn't much of a man. He was kind-hearted, but shiftless, but pretty handsome for a man from Maine. My mother died when I was six years old. Things got bad. I was the youngest. The oldest was only ten years old. She was the head of the house. She had the pluck of a woman. We got along somehow, until one day, when she and I were scrubbing the floor, she caught cold. She died in three days."

Here he paused; and, without glancing at Miss Raglan, who sat very still, but looking at him, he lighted his cigar.

"Then things got worse. My father took to drinking hard, and we had mighty little to eat. I chored around, doing odd things in the village. I have often wondered that people didn't see the stuff that was in me, and give me a chance. They didn't, though. As for my relatives: one was a harness-maker. He sent me out in the dead of winter to post bills for miles about, and gave me ten cents for it. Didn't even give me a meal. Twenty years after he came to me and wanted to borrow a hundred dollars. I gave him five hundred on condition that he'd not come near me for the rest of his natural life.

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ton, and went for a cabin-boy on a steamer; travelled down to Panama, and from there to Brazil. At Brazil I got on another ship, and came round to San Francisco. I got into trouble in San Francisco with the chief mate of the *Flying Polly*, because I tried to teach him his business. One of the first things I learned in life was not to interfere with people who had a trade and didn't understand it. In San Francisco I got out of the situation. I took to selling newspapers in the streets. There wasn't enough money in it. I went for a cabin-boy again, and travelled to Australia. There, once more, I resigned my position, chiefly because I wouldn't cheerfully let the Mate bang me about the quarter-deck. I expect I was a precocious youth, and wasn't exactly the kind for Sunday-school prizes. In Melbourne I began to speculate. I found a ticket for the theatre where an American actor—our biggest actor to-day—was playing, and I tried to sell it outside the door of the theatre where they were crowding to see him. The man who bought it was the actor himself. He gave me two dollars more than the regular price. I expect he knew from my voice I was an American. Is there anything peculiar about my voice, Miss Raglan?"

She looked at him quickly, smiled, and said in a low tone: "Yes, something peculiar. Please go on."

"Well, anyway, he said to me: 'Look here, where did you come from, my boy?' I told him the State of Maine. 'What are you doing here?' he asked. 'Speculating,' said I, 'and seeing things.' He looked me up and down. 'How are you getting on?' 'Well. I've made four dollars to-day,' I answered. 'Out of this ticket?' I expect I grinned. He suddenly caught me by the arm and whisked me inside the theatre—the first time I'd ever been in a theatre in my life. I shall

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never forget it. He took me around to his dressing-room, stuck me in a corner, and prodded me with his forefinger. 'Look here,' he said, 'I guess I'll hire you to speculate for me.' And that's how I came to get twenty-five dollars a month and my living from a great American actor. When I got back to America—with him—I had two hundred and fifty dollars in cash, and good clothes. I started a peanut-stand, and sold papers and books, and became a speculator. I heard two men talking one day at my stall about a railway that was going to run through a certain village, and how they intended to buy up the whole place. I had four hundred and fifty dollars then. I went down to that village, and bought some lots myself. I made four thousand dollars. Then I sold more books, and went on speculating."

He paused, blew his cigar-smoke slowly from him a moment; then turned with a quick look to Miss Raglan, and smiled as at some incongruous thing. He was wondering what would be the effect of his next words.

"When I was about twenty-two, and had ten thousand dollars, I fell in love. She was a bright-faced, smart girl. Her mother kept a boarding-house in New York; not an up-town boarding-house. She waited on table. I suppose a man can be clever in making money, and knowing how to handle men, and not know much about women. I thought she was worth a good deal more to me than the ten thousand dollars. She didn't know I had that money. A drummer—that's a commercial traveller—came along, who had a salary of, maybe, a thousand dollars a year. She jilted me. She made a mistake. That year I made twenty-five thousand dollars. I saw her a couple of years ago. She was keeping a boarding-house too, and her daughter

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was waiting on table. I'm sorry for that girl: it isn't any fun being poor. I didn't take much interest in women after that. I put my surplus affections into stocks and shares, and bulling and bearing. . . . Well, that is the way the thing has gone till now."

"What became of your father and your brother?" she asked in a neutral tone.

"I don't know anything about my father. He disappeared after I left, and never turned up again. And Jim—poor Jim!—he was shiftless. Jim was a tanner. It was no good setting him up in business. Steady income was the cheapest way. But Jim died of too much time on his hands. His son is in Mexico somewhere. I sent him there, and I hope he'll stay. If he doesn't, his salary stops: he is shiftless too. That is not the kind of thing, and they are not the kind of people you know best, Miss Raglan."

He looked at her, eyes full-front, bravely, honestly, ready to face the worst. Her head was turned away. He nodded to himself. It was as he feared.

At that moment a boy came running along the walk towards them, and handed Mr. Vandewaters a telegram. He gave the lad a few pence, then, with an apology, opened the telegram. Presently he whistled softly, in a quick surprised way. Then he stuffed the paper into his waistcoat pocket, threw away his cigar, and turned to Gracia Raglan, whose face as yet was only half towards him. "I hope your news is good," she said very quietly.

"Pretty bad, in a way," he answered. "I have lost a couple of millions—maybe a little more."

She gasped, and turned an astonished face on him. He saw her startled look, and laughed.

"Does it not worry you?" she asked.

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"I have got more important things on hand just now," he answered. "Very much more important," he added, and there was that in his voice which made her turn away her head again.

"I suppose," he went on, "that the story you have just heard is not the kind of an autobiography you would care to have told in your drawing-room?"

Still she did not reply; but her hands were clasped tightly in front of her. "No: I suppose not," he went on—"I suppose not. And yet, do you know, Miss Raglan, I don't feel a bit ashamed of it, after all: which may be evidence of my lost condition."

Now she turned to him with a wonderful light in her eyes, her sweet, strong face rich with feeling. She put out her hand to his arm, and touched it quickly, nervously.

"Your story has touched me inexpressibly," she said. "I did not know that men could be so strong and frank and courageous as you. I did not know that men could be so great; that any man could think more of what a woman thought of—of his life's story—than of"—she paused, and then gave a trembling little laugh —"of two millions or more."

He got to his feet, and faced her. "You—you are a woman, by heaven!" he said. "You are finer even than I thought you. I am not worthy to ask you what I had in my mind to ask you; but there is no man in God's universe who would prize you as I do. I may be a poor man before sundown. If that happens, though, I shall remember the place where I had the biggest moment of my life, and the woman who made that moment possible."

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Smiling, he slowly answered: "I wouldn't if I were sure about my dollars."

She did not reply, but glanced down, not with coquetry, but because she could not stand the furnace of his eyes.

"You said a moment ago," she ventured, "that you have had one big moment in your life. Oughtn't it to bring you good fortune?"

"It will—it will," he said, reaching his hand towards hers.

"No, no," she rejoined archly. "I am going. Please do not follow me." Then, over her shoulder, as she left him: "If you have luck, I shall want a subscription for my hospital."

"As many thousands as you like," he answered: then, as she sped away: "I will have her, and the millions too!" adding reminiscently: "Yes, Lady Lawless, this is my biggest deal."

He tramped to the stables, asked for and got a horse, and rode away to the railway station. It was dinner-time when he got back. He came down to dinner late, apologising to Lady Lawless as he did so. Glancing across the table at Mr. Pride, he saw a peculiar excited look in the young man's face.

"The baby fool!" he said to himself. "He's getting into mischief. I'll startle him. If he knows that an army of his dollars is playing at fox-and-geese, he'll not make eyes at Lady Lawless this way—little ass."

Lady Lawless appeared oblivious of the young man's devotional exercises. She was engaged on a more congenial theme. In spite of Miss Raglan's excellent acting, she saw that something had occurred. Mr. Vandewaters was much the same as usual, save that his voice had an added ring. She was not sure that all was right; but she was determined to know. Sir Duke was amused

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generally. He led a pretty by-play with Mrs. Gregory Thorne, of whom he asked the details of the day, much to the confusion, not admirably hid, of Mr. Pride; lamenting now and then Mr. Vandewaters's absence from the shooting.

Mr. Vandewaters was cool enough. He said that he had been playing at nine-pins with railways, which was good enough sport for him. Soon after dinner, he was handed two telegrams. He glanced slowly up at Pride, as if debating whether to tell him something. He evidently decided against it, and, excusing himself by saying he was off to take a little walk in Wall Street, went away to the telegraph office, where he stayed three hours.

The magnitude of the concerns, the admirable stoicism with which he received alarming news, his dry humour while they waited between messages—all were so unlike anything the telegraph-clerk had ever seen, or imagined, that the thing was like a preposterous dream. Even when, at last, a telegram came which the clerk vaguely felt was, somehow, like the fall of an empire, Mr. Vandewaters remained unmoved. Then he sent one more telegram, gave the clerk a pound, asked that the reply be sent to him as soon as it came, and went away, calmly smoking his cigar.

It was a mild night. When he got to the house he found some of the guests walking on the veranda. He joined them; but Miss Raglan was not with them; nor were Lady Lawless and Mr. Pride. He wanted to see all three, and so he went into the house. There was no one in the drawing-room. He reached the library in time to hear Lady Lawless say to Mr. Pride, who was

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The door closed. Mr. Vandewaters stepped forward. He understood the situation. "I guess I know how to advise him, Lady Lawless," he said.

She turned on him quietly, traces of hauteur in her manner. Her self-pride had been hurt. "You have heard?" she asked.

"Only your last words, Lady Lawless. They were enough. I feel guilty in having brought him here."

"You need not. I was glad to have your friend. He is young and effusive. Let us say no more about it. He is tragically repentant; which is a pity. There is no reason why he should not stay, and be sensible. Why should young men lose their heads, and be so absurdly earnest?"

"Another poser, Lady Lawless."

"In all your life you never misunderstood things so, I am sure."

"Well, there is no virtue in keeping your head steady. I have spent most of my life wooing Madame Fortune; I find that makes a man canny."

"She has been very kind to you."

"Perhaps it would surprise you if I told you that at this moment I am not worth ten thousand dollars."

She looked greatly astonished. "I do not understand," she said. She was thinking of what this might mean to Gracia Raglan.

"You see I've been playing games at a disadvantage with some ruffians at New York. They have combined and got me into a corner. I have made my last move. If it comes out right I shall be richer than ever; if not I must begin all over again."

Lady Lawless looked at him curiously. She had never met a man like him before. His power seemed almost Napoleonic; his imperturbability was absolute. Yet she

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noticed something new in him. On one side a kind of grim forcefulness; on the other, a quiet sort of human sympathy. The one, no doubt, had to do with the momentous circumstances amid which he was placed; the other, with an event which she had, perhaps prematurely, anticipated.

"I wonder—I wonder at you," she said. "How do you keep so cool while such tremendous things are happening?"

"Because I believe in myself, Lady Lawless. I have had to take my measure a good many times in this world. I never was defeated through my own stupidity. It has been the sheer luck of the game."

"You do not look like a gamester," she said.

"I guess it's all pretty much a game in life, if you look at it right. It is only a case of playing fair or foul."

"I never heard any Englishmen talk as you do."

"Very likely not," he responded. "I don't want to be unpleasant; but most Englishmen work things out by the rule their fathers taught them, and not by native ingenuity. It is native wit that tells in the end, I'm thinking."

"Perhaps you are right," she rejoined. "There must be a kind of genius in it." Here her voice dropped a little lower. "I do not believe there are many Englishmen, even if they had your dollars—"

"The dollars I had this morning," he interposed.

"—who could have so strongly impressed Gracia Raglan."

He looked thoughtfully on the ground; then raised his eyes to Lady Lawless, and said in a low, ringing tone:

"Yes, I am going to do more than 'impress': I am going to convince her."

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"When?" she asked.

"To-morrow morning, I hope," was the reply. "I believe I shall have my millions again."

"If you do," she said slowly, "do you not think that you ought to run no more risks—for her sake?"

"That is just what I mean to do, Lady Lawless. I'll settle millions where they ought to be settled, drop Wall Street, and—go into training."

"Into training?" she asked.

"Yes, for a house on the Hudson, a villa at Cannes, a residence in Grosvenor Square, and a place in Devonshire—or somewhere else. Then," he added, with a twinkle in his eye, "I shall need a good deal of time to cultivate accent."

"Don't!" she said. "You are much more charming as you are."

They passed into the drawing-room.

"Are these things to be told?" she asked, with a little suggestion in her voice.

"I can trust your discretion."

"Even in such circumstances?" she asked. She paused, with a motion of her fan back towards the room they had left.

"You have taught him a lesson, Lady Lawless. It is rough on him; but he needs it."

"I hope he will do nothing rash," she said.

"Perhaps he'll write some poetry, and refuse to consider his natural appetite."

"Will you go and see him now?" she asked.

"Immediately. Good night, Lady Lawless." His big hand swallowed hers in a firm, friendly clasp, and he shook it once or twice before he parted from her. He met Sir Duke Lawless in the doorway. They greeted cheerfully, and then Lawless came up to his wife.

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"Well, my dear," he said, with an amused look in his face, "well, what news?"

She lifted her eyebrows at him.

"Something has happened, Molly, I can see it in your face."

She was very brief. "Gracia Raglan has been conquered; the young man from Boston has been foolish; and Mr. Vandewaters has lost millions."

"Eh? That's awkward," said Sir Duke.

"Which?" asked his wife.

Vandewaters found Mr. Pride in his bedroom, a waif of melancholy. He drew a chair up, lighted a cigar, eyed the young man from head to foot, and then said:

"Pride, have you got any backbone? If you have, brace up. You are ruined. That's about as mild as I can put it."

"You know all?" said the young man helplessly, his hands clasped between his knees in æsthetic agony.

"Yes; I know more than you do, as you will find out. You're a nice sort of man, to come into a man's house, in a strange land, and make love to his wife. Now, what do you think of yourself? You're a nice representative of the American, aren't you?"

"I—I didn't mean any harm—I—couldn't help it," replied the stricken boy.

"O, for God's sake, drop that bib-and-tucker twaddle! Couldn't help it! Every scoundrel, too weak to face the consequences of his sin, says he couldn't help it. So help me, Joseph, I'd like to thrash you. Couldn't help it! Now, sit up in your chair, take this cigar, drink this glass of whiskey I'm pouring for you, and make up your mind that you're going to be a man and not a nincompoop—sit still! Don't fly up. I mean

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what I say. I've got business to talk to you. And make up your mind that, for once, you have got to take life seriously."

"What right have you to speak to me like this?" demanded the young man with an attempt at dignity.

Vandewaters laughed loudly.

"Right? Great Scott! The right of a man who thinks a damned sight more of your reputation than you do yourself, and of your fortune than you would ever have wits to do. I am the best friend you've got, and not the less your friend because I feel like breaking your ribs. Now, enough of that. This is what I have to say, Pride: to-night you and I are beggars. You understand? Beggars. Out in the cold world, out in the street. Now, what do you think of that?"

The shock to Mr. Pride was great. Mr. Vandewaters had exaggerated the disaster; but he had done it with a purpose. The youth gasped "My God!" and dropped his glass. Vandewaters picked it up, and regarded him a moment in silence. Then he began to explain their financial position. He did not explain the one bold stroke which he was playing to redeem their fortunes: if possible. When he had finished the story, he said, "I guess that's a bit more serious than the little affair in the library half an hour ago?"

He rose to his feet. "Look here, Pride, be a man. You've never tried it yet. Let me teach you how to face the world without a dollar; how to make a fortune. Then, when you've made it, you'll get what you've never had yet—the pleasure of spending money dug out of your own wits."

He carried conviction into a mind not yet all destroyed by effeminacy and indulgence of the emotions. Something of the iron of his own brain got into the brain

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of the young man, who came to his feet trembling a little, and said: "I don't mind it so much, if you only stick to me, Vandewaters."

A smile flickered about the corners of Vandewaters's mouth.

"Take a little more whiskey," he said; "then get into bed, and go to sleep. No nonsense, remember; go to sleep. To-morrow morning we will talk. And see here, my boy,"—he caught him by both arms and fastened his eyes,—"you have had a lesson: learn it backwards. Good night."

Next morning Mr. Vandewaters was early in the grounds. He chatted with the gardener, and discussed the merits of the horses with the groom, apparently at peace with the world. Yet he was watching vigilantly the carriage-drive from the public-road. Just before breakfast-time a telegraph messenger appeared. Vandewaters was standing with Sir Duke Lawless when the message was handed to him. He read it, put it into his pocket, and went on talking. Presently he said: "My agent is coming from town this morning, Sir Duke. I may have to leave to-night." Then he turned, and went to his room.

Lady Lawless had heard his last words.

"What about your ranche in Colorado, Duke?"

"About as sure, I fancy, as your millionaire for Gracia."

Miss Raglan did not appear at breakfast with the rest. Neither did Mr. Pride, who slept late that morning. About ten o'clock Mr. Vandewaters's agent arrived. About twelve o'clock Mr. Vandewaters saw

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"What is this?" she asked, a little startled.

"A thousand for your hospital," was the meaning reply.

She flushed, and came to her feet.

"I have won," he said.

And then he reached out and took both her hands.

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